

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT IN CORE
LEADERSHIP COURSES AT A MILITARY ACADEMY IN THE MIDWEST

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this applied study was to provide recommendations to improve curriculum alignment in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The problem was that the core leadership courses had undergone significant format, instructor, and course director changes over the past few years, and this perceivably affected the alignment of curriculum across these courses. The rationale for this study was that it is critical to improve alignment within and across the core leadership courses to enhance the ability to meet the organizational mission and better prepare the students for their future role as military officers. The central research question was: How can curriculum alignment be improved in the core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest? To answer this question, a multimethod approach was utilized. Three forms of data were collected for this applied research including interviews, a review of documents, and a quantitative survey. The qualitative data were analyzed using codes and themes. The quantitative data were analyzed using graphical representations of the results. Two recommendations to improve curriculum alignment were developed to address the problem. The first recommendation was to develop a faculty development plan including onboarding, required course audits, and faculty workshops. The second recommendation was to establish an interdisciplinary discipline lead. The timeline for successful implementation of these two recommendations was proposed for one to two years.

Keywords: alignment, curriculum, improve, leadership

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my parents, my loving husband David, and my son Zye who have always supported and encouraged me through all the chaos. Mom, you instilled a love of learning and curiosity that has and continues to be a driving force in my pursuit of education and desire to learn. Dad, you have always been my role-model and demonstrated a strong work ethic, an unceasing devotion to family, and unconditional love. David, words cannot express how grateful I am to have you beside me on this crazy ride. You have been a source of strength and never let me quit, no matter how much I wanted to. Zye, you have been my inspiration, my motivation, and my reason to never give up. Watching you grow up with a passion to learn has been encouraging. I feel so blessed and grateful to have each of you in my life and on my team.

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List of Abbreviations

Air Force Instruction (AFI)

Air Officer Commanding (AOC)

Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD)

Curriculum Handbook (CHB)

Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership (DFBL)

Department of the Air Force (DAF)

Leaders of Character Framework (LoCF)

Leadership, Teamwork, Organizations, and Management (LTOM)

Personal, Interpersonal, Team, & Organization (PITO)

United States Air Force (USAF)

United States Space Force (USSF)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to improve alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The problem was the current core leadership curriculum had undergone significant changes over the past few years to include changes in leadership, delivery format, and even course structure, which had significantly affected the alignment within and across these courses. This chapter of the report presented an Introduction to the Problem, the Significance of the Research, the Purpose Statement, Central Research Question, and Definitions for this research.

Background

To better understand the role of curriculum within and across these courses and how it related to the organizational mission of Developing Leaders of Character, it was important to examine curriculum, leadership, and character through the historical, social, and theoretical perspectives.

Historical Perspective

When considering the historical perspective, it was essential to look at the history of curriculum and leadership.

Curriculum

Ralph W. Tyler held many roles in the field of education and, as a scholar, had fundamental concerns regarding the applied utility of education and students' quality of experience within the classroom (Apple & Teitelbaum, 2016). Much of his work focused on learning experiences rather than the activities associated with learning. His belief was that the activities planned by the teacher and the curriculum were incomplete, and thus, experiences were

important in the promotion or inhibition of learning. Perhaps, one of the most important contributions to the field of education was the curriculum syllabus which is still in print today (Eisner, 2016). In Tyler's (1949) book *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instructions*, he proposed one of the first and most simplistic curriculum models; however, when initially presented, it was not intended to be a curriculum model. The Tyler (1949) Rationale, as it is often known, consisted of four steps:

1. determine the school's purpose,
2. identify educational experiences related to purpose,
3. organize the experiences, and
4. evaluate the purpose.

While this model is simple, it is still regarded by many within education as one of the strongest curriculum development models.

Joseph Schwab (1969) presented at the American Education Research Association regarding the relationship between current educational theory and the nature of curricular problems, based on his personal belief that the contributions within American education were not quality. Shortly thereafter, his address was published under the title *The Practical: A Language for Curriculum* (1969) followed by two additional 'practical papers' *The Practical: Arts of Eclectic* (1971) and *The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum* (1973). These works suggested the need for a balanced curriculum and the involvement of a teacher, a learner, and the subject, to address complex problems (North et al., 2018). Schwab (1983) defined curriculum in his paper *Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do*:

Curriculum is what is successfully conveyed to differing degrees to different students, by committed teachers using appropriate materials and actions, of legitimated bodies of

knowledge, skill, taste, and propensity to act and react, which are chosen for instruction after serious reflection and communal decision by representatives of those involved in the teaching of a specified group of students known to the decision makers. (p. 240)

Leadership

Leadership, in the early and mid-1800s, centered on Carlyle's (1841) heroes' speech and placed the emphasis of leadership on the great men mindset. Haskins (2013) stated, "In our stories, leaders often play the dominant role. They are the heroes, and the notion that they are the most important members of the team is drummed into us as children" (p. 6). As research progressed and the idea of leadership began to spark an interest, the theories began to change. In the early 1900s leadership was thought to be centralized power or domination and had multiple definitions in which this was highlighted. In the early twentieth century, leadership was viewed as a much more controlling position. Moore (1927) defined leadership as "the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation" (p. 124). While Craig (1927) defined leadership as, "the name for that combination of qualities by the possession of which one is able to get something done by others chiefly because through his influence they are willing to do it" and went on to say, "the measure of morale is the measure of leadership" (p 156). The thoughts of leadership shifted more toward influence and groups over the following decades. Nearing the 1970s, the mindset and definition of leadership evolved and shifted toward an organizational structure focus. From the 1980s to the present day, leadership has begun to be thought about, explored, and academically researched; thus, multiple definitions and themes have bloomed and are up for debate (Northouse, 2019). While leadership has many definitions, one can find a way to define leadership dependent upon the organizational needs in which one desires leadership. Since there are many types of organizations, there also exists a

varied need for different forms of leadership styles and approaches.

Character

When considering character, historically, leadership research has considered it to be a trait and failed to identify how one develops character. Additionally, much like leadership, historical research has failed to produce an agreed-upon definition of character (Howard, 2015); however, the U.S. Department of the Army (2012) defined character as “the essence of who a person is, what a person believes, how a person acts” (p. 5). While Lickona (1991) attested that character is made up of three interconnected parts, which he identified as moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. “*Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action*” (p. 51). An individual’s leadership is defined by their character and these two cannot be divided.

Social Perspective

When considering curriculum, a question often arises around the idea of what is worth learning, and according to Fischer et al. (2018), “Studies of learning must focus beyond the individual to include the context in which the individual is interacting” (p. 36). The idea of teaching leadership and character development as part of the overarching curriculum in service academies is not new and must be looked at through a social perspective lens. In an article discussing America’s three largest service academies, Born et al. (2012) stated, “Character and leadership development is emphasized through both experiential learning opportunities and structured Socratic exchanges” (p. 50). Often, students have self-awareness about their own thoughts of leadership, character, and moral compass, and these thoughts may or may not be open to feedback or challenges introduced in the classroom. Barnett and Coate (2005) proposed an approach to curriculum that embraced the three domains that include knowing, acting, and

being. The emphasis of this approach focused on the engagement of the wider community linking students as active and global citizens with ethical and moral roles. In consideration and development of the leadership curriculum at service academies, it is important to understand the social significance of self-awareness and how the placement of these courses in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership can play a role in the success of this developmental experience. After a visit to West Point in 1964, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, then Army Chief of Staff, wrote a letter to West Point Superintendent, Major General Maxwell Taylor, in which he addressed his observations and thoughts on leadership development at West Point. In a passage from the letter to Major General Taylor, General Eisenhower (as cited in Caslen & Matthews, 2020) stated:

A feature I would very much like to see in the curriculum is a course in practical or applied psychology. I realize that tremendous advances have been made in the matter of leadership and personnel management since I was a Cadet. Nevertheless, I am sure it is a subject that should receive the constant and anxious care of the Superintendent and his assistants on the Academic Board, and these should frequently call in for consultation experts from both other schools and from among persons who have made an outstanding success in industrial and economic life. Too frequently we find young officer trying to use empirical and ritualistic methods in the handling of individuals—I think that both theoretical and practical instruction along this line could, at the very least, awaken the majority of Cadets to the necessity of handling human problems on a human basis and do much to improve leadership and personnel handling in the Army at large. (pp. 164-165)

This passage highlighted the importance not only of aligning the leadership education received at service academies to the behavioral sciences but also highlighted the importance of evaluating

curriculum from external sources to ensure social alignment and application of learning objectives beyond the classroom environment.

Theoretical Perspective

Early curriculum, sometimes referred to as the classic curriculum model, had a limited scope and was typically only indicative of the textbook(s) a student should seek to master (Palupi, 2018). Curricular development and alignment continue to increase in complexity; however, the theories regarding curriculum development have not changed significantly over the past several decades (Hansen, 2019). In fact, the work of Ralph Tyler (1949) and the Tyler Rationale remains one of the most used approaches to curricular design. According to Bobbitt's (1912) book *The Curriculum* (as cited in Hansen, 2019), the role of education is likened to workforce preparation. Considering the role of graduates from service academies in becoming military officers, the leadership curriculum should be just that, preparation to lead.

The science of leadership is not only multifaceted, but theories and studies continue to evolve through application, observation, and research. According to O'Connor et al. (2015), "To accomplish these goals, students must develop and function on a continuum that starts with leading oneself at the individual level and ends with leading others in large, complex organizations" (p. 149). Within the core leadership curriculum, many leadership concepts and theories are introduced and discussed, starting with the personal level of leadership, followed by the interpersonal (one-on-one) approach to leadership, leading to learning how to lead teams, and culminating with leading organizations.

Problem Statement

The problem was that the current core leadership curriculum had undergone significant changes over the past several years to include leadership, format, and structure, which had

significantly impacted the alignment within and across these courses. With the newly created department learning outcomes, there was a strong need for a thorough examination of the department curriculum, especially the leadership courses. According to the Curriculum Handbooks (U.S. Air Force Academy [USAFA], 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2019, 2020), the core leadership courses have changed not only in course name but also in format, structure, and alignment under a new institutional outcome and overall course description. In a curriculum assessment experiment by Cappell and Kamens (2002), the authors determined that the design of both the curriculum and assessments should be derived from the identified student learning goals. Additionally, the exposure of students to the same curriculum across the discipline will eliminate the variance across the student population. Thus, ensuring the curriculum is the same both throughout each level of the course and across the discipline should yield more consistent student knowledge and outcomes. Jacobs (2004) stated, “Curriculum maps have the potential to become the hub for making decisions about teaching and learning ... Mapping becomes an integrating force to discuss not only curriculum issues, but also programmatic ones” (p.126). Education and experiences at the collegiate level have been documented to have a profound effect on a student’s attitudes and values, and the influence of education has even been linked to moral behavior-based values (Astin, 1997; Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Hendrix et al., 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Therefore, ensuring the leadership curriculum is aligned within the organization and within the discipline would not only ensure a clear and concise learning experience but would scaffold the concepts and skills necessary for their future roles within the military.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this applied study was to improve curriculum alignment in core

leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest and to formulate a solution to address the problem. A multimethod design was used consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first approach was structured interviews with the core leadership faculty. The second approach was a review of documents. The third approach was survey data gathered from the department faculty instructors.

Significance of the Study

The benefits of improving curriculum alignment in the core leadership courses included both internal and external stakeholders. According to Astin (1997), within higher education, the challenge associated with leadership development for students occurs within the capacity to “help develop those special talents and attitudes that will enable them to become effective social change agents” (p. 9). This study focused specifically on the core leadership curriculum but could be beneficial in addressing the integration and alignment of other core academic areas offered at military academies. In an article addressing service academies, it was stated, “Our graduates are expected to be consummate professionals, role models for those whom they lead, and most importantly to project to the world the values, the understanding, and the humanity that define our nation” (Born et al., 2012, p. 48). Under the section titled Desired Learning Continuum End States, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (2020) publication highlighted the significance of leader development:

Joint leader development for the 21st century is the product of a learning continuum composed of training, staff and operational experience, education, exercises, and self-development/improvement. To achieve intellectual overmatch against adversaries, we must produce the most professionally competent, strategic-minded, and critically thinking officers possible. (p. 4)

Therefore, this study sought to improve the quality of students' success through improved alignment of the core leadership curriculum. When discussing the importance of leadership in the military, Wong et al. (2003) said, "At the lowest level, military leadership can be the difference between life and death for many people. At the highest level, the survival of our nation relies upon the leaders in the military" (p. 660). Thus, core leadership courses are significant in the development of quality leaders and affects social change within the United States government.

Research Questions

Central Question: How can curriculum alignment be improved in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Sub-question 1: How would instructors in an interview address the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Sub-question 2: How would a review of documents inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Sub-question 3: How would quantitative survey data inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Definitions

1. *Character* – "the essence of who a person is, what a person believes, how a person acts" (U.S. Department of the Army, 2012, p. 5).
2. *Concepts* – "a means by which learners engage with the world" (Yip & Raelin, 2012, p. 334).
3. *Curriculum* - "a set of procedures, concepts, and processes to be carefully constructed in relation to a particular educational setting" (Hansen, 2019, p. 506).
4. *Curriculum statement* – a statement which "offers a general overview of the subject

intended to give readers a clear idea of how it is taught in the school, and the context in which it is taught” (Steward, 2020, p. 19)

5. *Leaders of Character* – “*Lives honorably* by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Air Force Core Values, *Lifts others* to their best possible selves, and *Elevates performance* toward a common and noble purpose” (Center for Character and Leadership Development, 2011, p. 9)

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to improve curriculum alignment in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The problem was the current core leadership curriculum had undergone significant changes over the past few years to include leadership, format, and structure, which has significantly impacted the alignment within these courses. This chapter of the report presented an Introduction to the Problem, the Significance of the Research, the Purpose Statement, Central Research Question, and Definitions for this research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter provides a conceptual framework and review of the literature surrounding curriculum alignment, leadership, and character development. A review of the literature focused on the areas of curriculum, leadership, and character. This chapter includes a look at some of the areas relating to curriculum, including curriculum design, alignment, and assessment.

Additionally, leadership theories and research with a focus on behavioral, trait, personality, skills, power and influence, situational, effective, and full-range leadership are examined and discussed. Finally, character research discussed developing leaders of character, leadership and character development, power and character development, and character systems. While these are just a few of the theories and literature reviews regarding curriculum, leadership, and character development, it is important to note that many other theories and research projects exist, but a full review and analysis of all this data would not be feasible.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this applied research is Ralph Tyler's (1949) curriculum model, although the Tyler Rationale, as it may be called, was not originally intended to be a curriculum model. Tyler's rationale consisted of four steps:

1. determine the school's purpose,
2. identify educational experiences related to purpose,
3. organize the experiences, and
4. evaluate the purpose.

While this model is simple, it is still regarded by many within education as one of the strongest curriculum development models. While this approach is simplistic in nature, it provides a more

informed way ahead for improving the alignment of the core leadership courses.

In education, curriculum has been researched and discussed for over six decades, but curriculum and alignment remain ambiguous to higher education faculty, often being viewed only in terms of the syllabus and content of the course (Deraney & Khanfar, 2020). In addition to Tyler's approach to curriculum, others have contributed to and provided alternative approaches and considerations for the development and alignment of curriculum. Taba (1962, as cited in Palupi, 2018) developed a curriculum model which advanced the classic curriculum model with aspects from Tyler's curriculum approach with aims focused on the organization of the learning material, then the learning experiences. In opposition to the linear approach within Tyler and Taba's curriculum models, the work of Wheeler (1967, as cited in Palupi, 2018) focused on a circular/cyclical curricular model, since in academics, as in life, there is not always a clearly defined beginning and end. The next two curricular models that emerged focused on the process of learning. Stenhouse (1975, as cited in Palupi, 2018) emphasized the importance of the learning process and insisted this should be the main focus when developing curriculum. While Kolb's (1984, 2015, as cited in Palupi, 2018) approach focused primarily on experiential learning and was centered around critical thinking and reflection to gain an understanding of the concepts and subject-related objectives.

Related Literature

Curricula decisions on how to facilitate higher education experiences tend to be presented differently across institutions and academic disciplines. Therefore, it is important to understand the meaning of curriculum and how curriculum design, alignment, and assessment can guide the process of student learning. Additionally, this section of the research will explore leadership theories and research as it relates to the topic areas currently being addressed within the

leadership courses. Character research was also discussed as it related to the curriculum and leadership concepts being presented within the classroom environment.

Curriculum

When considering how to define curriculum, it is important to understand the context of the curriculum being defined. Hansen (2019) defined curriculum as “a set of procedures, concepts, and processes to be carefully constructed in relation to a particular educational setting” (p. 506). This definition provides an extremely broad description of tools that can be utilized within a general setting. Odom et al. (2021) stated simply that curricular experiences are those which are credit-bearing and part of the academic curriculum. There are mixed perceptions when it comes to understanding the meaning of curriculum, but a simplified understanding is an encompassing structured plan for what ought to be learned or the ‘what’ that students should be taught in the classroom (Sealy, 2020). Curriculum is not an easy term to define because the meaning is influenced by societal understanding, values, beliefs, class, and gender and would have differing definitions based on the context (Palastanga, 2021; Roofe & Bezzina, 2018). Veugelers (2019) highlighted the levels of curriculum, as defined by John Goodlad, and emphasized the need for awareness of these levels regarding moral education:

- The *ideal* level. The general pedagogical goals, as formulated in speeches and documents.
- The *formal* level. The regulations and formal descriptions of the curriculum. The guidelines teachers have to follow.
- The *interpreted* level. This is how a teacher interpreted the formal curriculum. Each teacher makes his/her own interpretation of the curriculum. Add examples and other topics, use other methods, and sometimes skip content. Educational systems differ in

the amount of freedom they give to the teachers to make their interpretation. But even in a very tight system there is always some space to make an interpretation.

- The *operationalized* level. This is about what teachers exactly do in their classroom. This practice can differ from what they intend to do. The practice is the reality researchers can observe.
- The *experienced* level. This is what students experience in the curriculum. Sometimes they miss a part of the content or they re-interpretate it. This level is really about what a student experiences. Different students can have different experiences.
- The *effected* level. Van den Akker (1992, as cited in Veugelers, 2019) added this level to focus more on the outcomes of the curriculum. What students really learn from it. In particular in the moral domain the distinction between experiences and effects is very relevant. For example, students can experience the value of care when helping other people. How this experience changes their attitude, how they value care is the outcome of another process. It is the result of giving a personal meaning to the experience and reflecting on the values you have. (p. 4)

Deraney and Khanfar (2020) identified the importance of considering how faculty members view the concept of curriculum and discussed the findings from Fraser and Bosanquet's (2006) study which identified four categories: "a) defined 'structure and content' of a single unity (product-oriented); b) structure and content of the larger academic program based on graduate outcomes (product-oriented); c) students' learning experiences within a teacher-led framework (process-oriented) and; d) faculty-student integrated and negotiated processes of teaching and learning (process-oriented)" (p. 272). Sealy (2020) stated "the role of curriculum is to take learners' shallow knowledge and understanding of the topic and make it deeper" (p. 61)

thus emphasizing the unique power analogies can possess within the curricular design process. Upon implementing curricular change, it is important to ensure the changes are assessed and evaluated at the course level and at the program level. Kulasegaram et al. (2018) identified three targets connected with programmatic assessment: “purposefully align and support the objectives of the curriculum through formative assessment; generate meaningful feedback to prepare students for future learning and encourage lifelong learning; and provide a more holistic and competency-based picture of student performance” (p. 445).

Developed curriculum should possess specific elements to help ensure it is robust and provides enough information for successful implementation and sustainment. One way to work toward this would be to start with a curriculum statement and curriculum plan as the foundation. A curriculum statement and plan are tools to help provide an approach to the curriculum and lay out a way forward for students, instructors, and other stakeholders. A curriculum statement is defined by Steward (2020) as a statement providing a broad overview of the subject planned and is intended to deliver a well-defined idea of how it is to be taught within the school along with the framework for delivery. Built from the curriculum statement, the curriculum plan (see Table 1) provides a catalog of topics and skills instructors deliver throughout each level of the course. The plan provides an overview of the topic, objectives, knowledge, and skills gained, assessment, and links to prior knowledge. The topic row provides the title (topic) of the lesson being taught, with the topic-specific objectives in the next row. Specific objectives clearly define what the students are intended to learn and experience. The intended knowledge and skills to be acquired from the lesson being taught are provided in alignment with the stated objectives. The assessment row provides the specific measurement of the acquired skills and knowledge associated with the lesson content and may include learning checks, such as discussions, quizzes,

homework, or other such approaches. The next row links the material to previous learning and identifies how it may play a role in how the topic needs to be addressed. Having a working knowledge of the links to prior learning will help the learner connect the material at a higher cognitive level (Steward, 2020).

Table 1
Template for Curriculum Plan

Leadership	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
Topic (Theory)					
Topic Objective					
Knowledge/Skill(s) to be Acquired					
Assessment					
Link(s) to prior/subsequent learning					
Application of Topic					

Additionally, it is important to understand that curriculum can be defined as diverse types in accordance with the research and the purpose. Palastanga (2021) defined school curriculum as “explicitly taught skills, shared knowledge within and across curriculum disciplines and other wider experiences” (p. 7). While some types of curricula may seem intuitive, such as coherent curriculum, school curriculum, or intended curriculum, this is not always the case for hidden curriculum. According to Palupi (2018), the term hidden curriculum was first proposed by Jackson in the late 1960s and is representative of the emphasis teachers placed on specific attitudes, values, or even worldviews within the learning practice that were not readily apparent or identified within the curriculum. Hidden curriculum is best understood through the omission of data and bias that is demonstrative of what the educator believes or thinks they are teaching and what is being learned by the student. Hidden curriculum can be intentional or unintentional but is viewed as a reflection of individual, organizational, and even disciple-specific attitudes, values, or beliefs (Ackerman-Barger et al., 2020; Rajput et al., 2017)

Design

Research by Alfauzan and Tarchouna (2017) found that learning outcomes are maximized through the use of a well-designed curriculum. Learning, as a focus of or, more importantly, an outcome of leadership programs, is necessary to allow the curriculum to be designed, assessed, and evaluated in an intentional manner, and there must be a balanced approach within leadership education and learning to effectively assess leadership (Odom et al., 2021). Graesser et al. (2022) posited the need for a combined learning approach dependent on the subject matter or task. Graesser et al. (2022) highlighted the six basic types of learning, as identified in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM; 2018) report on *How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures*, to include:

- habit formation and conditioning,
- observational learning,
- implicit pattern learning,
- perceptual and motor learning,
- learning of facts, and
- learning by making inferences through reasoning and mental models. (pp. 17.5-17.6)

It is important to delineate between the distinct types of learning when developing curriculum because the type of learning expected will play a role in determining the necessary approach to teaching, the learning objectives, and learning activities.

The design approach to developing curriculum at any level helps to guide the process toward successful implementation. One approach to curriculum design is backward design. As the name suggests, the backward design in curriculum planning begins with the end. “Backward Design is beneficial to instructors because it innately encourages intentionality during the design

process” (Bowen, 2017, para 5), and educators who use backward design start with the outcomes when planning their design. This is the idea behind Tyler’s (1949) curriculum approach. Another similar approach to designing curriculum is Understanding by Design®. When using the Understanding by Design® approach for curricular design, a critical starting point is goal clarity. The targeted goals are the starting point in the planning process, and everything, including the schedule, instructional resources (textbooks, articles, case studies, etc.), learning experiences and activities, and even assessments, are developed based on these established goals (McTighe & Willis, 2019). The Understanding by Design® method and backward design method are similar in that they both start with the idea that the end goal that needs to be achieved for the curriculum to be considered a success is the starting point for the design. Other such approaches to curricular design are centered on a specific idea, such as a skill or subject area or a person, such as the learner or student.

Alignment

According to Shaltry (2020), “An aim of alignment is to ensure courses are designed to clearly and accurately communicate to students what they will learn and to outside stakeholders what has been learned” (p. 663). In earlier research, Biggs (1996) argued,

In aligned teaching, there is maximum consistency throughout the system. The curriculum is stated in the form of clear objectives, which state the level of understanding required rather than a list of topics to be covered. Teaching methods are chosen that are likely to realize those objectives; you get students to do the things that the objectives nominate. ... All components in the system address the same agenda and support each other. (p. 26)

When it comes to student learning, according to Nguyen and Laws (2019), Biggs’ (2003)

constructive alignment, focused on the alignment of curriculum outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks, is considered a higher-order process. When looking at constructive alignment, it is important to understand the meanings of both constructive and alignment and how they outline the theory. Lasrado and Kaul (2021) found a need for curriculum to be taught in an authentic nature and stated curriculum is most effective when it meets constructive alignment. The authors further identified the need for clearly defined learning outcomes, which can be achieved through thoughtfully designed learning experiences and assessments. Biggs and Tang (2011) defined *constructive* as related to constructivist theory and stated, “learners use their own activity to construct their knowledge and interpreted through their own existing schemata” (p. 97). Alignment was defined by the authors as, “a principle in curriculum theory that assessment tasks should be aligned to what it is intended to be learned, as in criterion-referenced assessment” (p. 97). Steward (2020) and Sealy (2020) highlighted the importance of the flow or step-by-step order of the skills and information being taught and emphasized the significance of ensuring the curriculum is presented in a properly sequenced format. There are three specified elements involved in constructive alignment, including the anticipated learning outcomes, the activities through teaching and learning, and the assessment of the tasks (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Deraney & Khanfar, 2020).

Assessment

Since students’ academic achievement (including their GPA) plays a direct role in the selection of the career field the student will be placed into upon entering active duty, the alignment and integration both within and across the core leadership courses, including course assessments, play a significant role in their life trajectories and future professional successes (Mammadov et al., 2021). Failure to assess course content could communicate a lack of

importance surrounding the content (McKown, 2017). “There is nothing worse than trying to learn something when one can’t see the point of learning it. Pupils appreciate a secure sense of direction and respond positively as a result of it” (Steward, 2020, p. 24). Kellough and Kellough (1999, as cited in Iqbal et al., 2019) identified seven purposes of assessment: a) assist students’ learning, b) identify the weaknesses and strengths of the students, c) evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and instructional strategies, d) assess and improve the curriculum program, e) assess and improve the teaching program, and f) provide data for decision making.

Assessment is a necessity for instructors and, when properly developed and executed, provides feedback regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum. Assessment, according to Brookhart and Nitko (2019), may include the information collected from students to inform instructional decisions and curricula policy or provide program feedback. Wiggins (1989, as cited in Lasrado & Kaul, 2021) identified the basic characteristics of authentic tests: the task should be representative of performance in the field, attention should be paid to teaching and learning the criteria for assessment, self-assessment should play a key role, and when possible, students should present their work publicly and defend it. There are many different ways for instructors to assess outcome achievement within the academic environment. One method for assessment is the use of short reflective writing assignments. Odom et al. (2021) stated, “A valuable experience is without meaning unless the experience is connected and applied” (p. 36). The authors went on to accentuate the value associated with the practice of reflective exercises and stated, “When a learner reflects upon their thoughts and emotions ... the nature of the learning process helps the learner to construct meaning from information and experiences” (Odom et al., 2021, p. 36) and allowed an appropriate measure of change regarding student knowledge, attitudes, and skills associated with the educational experience. A general

understanding of concepts is needed in order for students to begin the process of forming a deeper understanding of the material and to be able to form a meaningful connection to the concepts and ideas (Sealy, 2020). As students are learning about leadership and character, the assessments associated with each must align with developmental models of leadership and character (Card, 2017).

Leadership

All students enrolled at the service academy are viewed as potential leaders who have already demonstrated the capabilities to further develop the skills to lead themselves and possess the potential to learn to lead others. To successfully identify these individuals, a process must exist that allows early signs of leadership to be identified (Luria et al., 2019). Since the emergence and effectiveness of leadership are best predicted by an individual's motivation to lead, it is an important aspect of the selection process (Badura et al., 2020; Grant & Shandell, 2022). Beşliu (2017) provided a definition of leadership, stating, "Leadership involves influencing the behaviour of subordinates by means of psychosocial instruments so that they carry out certain tasks, taking into account organizational goals" (p. 151). This military academy seeks to identify leadership potential and values the ability to lead through the display of the individual's character. According to Callina et al. (2017), the research surrounding virtues and specific character attributes is not in short supply, but when it comes to the processes of character development, an absence of research exists. Furthermore, Callina et al. discussed the college experience at an undergraduate level, offering an effective environment for the promotion of identifying and improving character development. The development of character and leadership involves academic courses, which include a multi-disciplinary behavioral sciences approach to leadership and experiential opportunities. The following leadership and

character-related literature will highlight some of the key theories and research applicable to the developmental process across the leadership core curriculum. This related literature is not all-inclusive but highlights the information thought to be applicable to this research paper.

Leadership has been noted as the most studied and least understood social science focus area due in part to the multi-disciplinary nature and the lack of an agreed-upon definition and specified concepts (Andenoro, 2013; Beşliu, 2017; Burns, 1978). Beşliu (2017) made further note that it is easier to demonstrate what leadership is not as opposed to what it should be. According to Allen et al. (1998), when considering the leadership challenges in today's society, the idea of leadership as a position of authority is deficient. Research from Odom et al. (2021) found that students who participated in a leadership program exhibited a broadening view of leadership, which moved from being focused on position to process. Therefore, some of the earlier published definitions that relate leadership to the position the individual holds or has been selected to fill do not meet the modern definition of what leadership is or what a leader is expected to be. However, when considering organizational successes and failures, while many factors would be considered contributory, one would be remiss to neglect the significant impact of leadership (Beşliu, 2017).

While leadership has many definitions and implications, the definition used for this research study is from Newman (2019) and involves the four components of leadership that scholars have typically come to agreement on:

- Process. Leadership is not a trait but is an interactive event that affects followers who may be your peers, those who report to you, or even those to whom you report.
- Influence. Leaders affect others.
- Groups. Leadership occurs within a group of people.

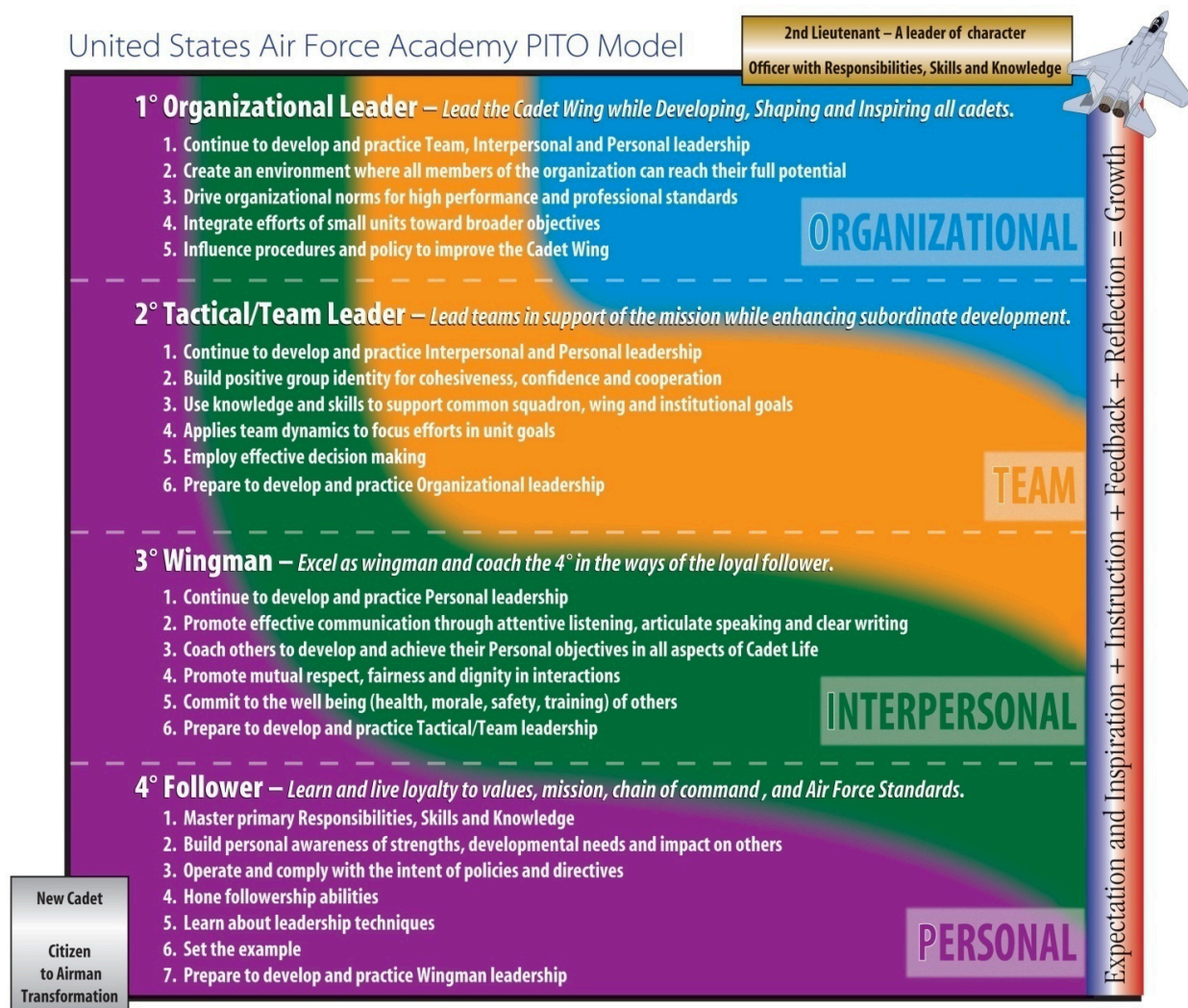
- Common goals. Leaders work toward achieving something. (p. 6)

In addition to the countless definitions and implications of leadership, many research studies and theories exist in the research realm surrounding leadership. As theories of leadership have evolved over the decades, there has been an emergence of emphasis placed on character dimensions (Newman, 2019). Perruci and Hall (2018) contended that teaching leadership does not neatly fall in line with a leadership discipline but that there are three lenses through which leadership can be taught: teaching ‘about’ leadership (knowledge), teaching ‘for’ leadership (application), and teaching ‘practical wisdom’ (knowledge + experience = wisdom).

Furthermore, Perruci and Hall proposed organizing the leadership curriculum into four levels: individual, team, organizational, and global. The authors recommended a programing for delivery of teaching leadership by interconnecting the lenses and levels, thus resulting in a table addressing each of the levels from each lens. Similarly, the institution utilizes the Personal, Interpersonal, Team, & Organization [PITO] model (see Figure 1) levels of leadership (USAFA, 2018b).

Figure 1

The PITO Model (U.S. Air Force Academy, 2018b, p. 13)



Note. From “The Officer Development System: Developing Officers of Character.” Copyright, 2018 by USAFA.

The model, starting from the lower left corner, demonstrates the path in an upward trajectory toward commissioning as a Second Lieutenant and Leader of Character. Each layer of the model highlights the expectations associated with the role the student plays in their own personal development. Each of these levels is introduced and taught over the course of four

years, starting with the personal level of leadership during the first year and building to the organizational level of leadership by the student's senior year. The PITO model allows various theories to be utilized in the development of character using coaching, mentoring, feedback, and reflection, starting with the development of personal leadership, followed by interpersonal leadership, team leadership, and finally, during the student's final year organizational leadership (Raymer et al., 2018). The ideas are introduced systematically with leadership theories to marry the concepts, approach, and practical application. The demands for leadership stem from an increase in leadership theories and the identified expectations of leaders on an interdisciplinary level and must take into consideration the leaders' character and how this impacts their overall ability and motivation to lead others. For this study, leadership research will be presented based on the research concepts and theories relating to leadership concepts as presented in the current curriculum of the core leadership courses.

Leadership 100

The introductory core leadership course, designed to be completed during the students' first year, is *Leadership 100: Foundations for Personal Leadership* and includes leadership concepts focused on the individual or personal level of the PITO model. In this course, students are introduced to the topics of society and structure, *The Sociological Imagination*, personality, the dark side of personality and leadership, and moral potency. As a Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership course, the curriculum encompasses both the psychological understanding of self and the role society plays in the development of oneself. Since the leader is typically viewed as the central component of leadership learning, an emphasis can be placed on the follower role within the processes of leadership (Perruci & Hall, 2018). As students are introduced to these topics, the idea of leadership and character development integrates the

understanding that leadership, or the act of leading, is not simply based on a title or position.

Sociology

Development is affected by many external demands that are often overlooked or not understood. The idea that society and structures play a role in who and how one develops is not something to be ignored; social structures or patterned configurations guide individual actions (Mills, 1959). These structures can be seen in schools through the formation of friend groups based on involvement or lack thereof. It is also extremely prevalent in the military, as demonstrated by the rank structure. In the book *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills (1959) demanded that readers consider these outside influences through the examination of both the direct and indirect roles these structures and sociological experiences play in shaping individuals. In examining these additional factors, individuals have a unique opportunity to see and accept a broader understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. In developing a broader view, individuals can begin to differentiate between personal troubles and social issues. While written in 1959, much of Mills' writing continues to be of significant relevance within the social sciences (Selwyn, 2017). Mills associated personal troubles as occurring within an individual's character and limited to direct dealings with others. However, social issues are larger and exist beyond the individual's immediate environment, having the potential to showcase a broader experience and societal impact. Regarding *The Sociological Imagination*, Bargheer (2021) emphasized the importance of the work by stating that it represented "one of the most influential texts of postwar American sociology" (p. 255). The development of the sociological imagination allows leaders to identify socio-cultural forces that may potentially affect individualities, personas, and personal independence.

Personality

According to Guo et al. (2020), “personality is the key to understanding the variation in how people feel, act, think and want” and “consists of four aspects, namely affect, behavior, cognition, and desire” (p. 4). As the students are transitioning from the microsystem they have potentially known their entire lives, they are presented with the unique opportunity to not only discover who they are as an adult but to reinvent who they are perceived to be. This is an opportunity to develop their own identity. Beck and Jackson (2021) highlighted the existence of differing opinions regarding the person-situation debate; however, one area of agreement is that the environment is a stimulus for personality coherence and change. Therefore, when the environment changes personality, coherence can be expected to also change. This is a chance for the student’s surroundings and peer network to impact the decisions they make on their journey to becoming a leader of character.

The development of a person’s personality has been questioned and researched for centuries, including research by the ancient philosopher Aristotle, as addressed in *Rhetoric, Book 2*, and one of his students, Theophrastus, who addressed 30 diverse types of personality (Donnellan & Robins, 2010). Heuertz (2017) explained that personality is a mask worn as a shield to hide one’s true character, which lies beneath, stating, “The English word *personality* is derived from the Latin word for ‘mask’” (pp. 30-31). Benner (2015) suggested that the masks worn and presented to the world start with how individuals want others to perceive them, but this evolves into how they want to see themselves, sometimes losing sight of the differences between the true self and the masked version of oneself and leading to a loss of authenticity. Therefore, it is important to consider how one’s personality could be a false version of oneself when seeking to become an authentic leader and improve one’s character. Recent research surrounding

personality science identified four domains for analysis, including “personality traits, motives, skills/abilities, and narrative identity” (Roberts & Yoon, 2022, p. 7.3). When personality traits are considered, the taxonomy of the Big Five domains of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness are directly related to the prediction of important life outcomes and laid a foundation for other fields of study.

The foundation of leadership involves the construction of a high-performing team and requires it to be upheld, which revolves around personality. Hogan et al. (2007) identified three reasons personality psychology is important, stating:

People are the most consequential, helpful, and also dangerous parts of the environment in which we live. ... True change depends on understanding how the world works. ... To improve our lives, relationships, careers, business organizations, or societies, we need as accurate a view of human nature as we can devise. (p. 13)

Personality research has focused primarily on understanding what people do and why, identifying potential patterns, and creating stability through time (Beck & Jackson, 2021). Hogan and Kaiser (2005) determined that leadership can be predicted through personality, thus creating the ability to select and develop future leaders to improve organizations. Character adds an extra layer beyond an individual’s personality and affects their personal ethics, the vision or goals they may hold for their life, their work ethic, and their attitude. Charisma can create a needless and excessive concern for creating and maintaining a favorable image (Orzeata, 2011). A person can be very charismatic but lack character, integrity, and virtue. “Leadership excellence is contingent on (1) the leader’s character, (2) his/her code of ethics, (3) the ethical ground rules s/he uses in decision making, (4) and the core values he/she uses to design the culture of the organization” (Sankar, 2003, p. 53). Character does not simply identify personality traits to be the measure for

successful leadership; it requires a much deeper look into the values that the individual holds deep within their moral center or core values (NASEM, 2018). When developing leaders of character, it is important to address these key areas for leader success and character development.

There must be a balance between the bright side of personality and the dark side of personality, which comes with an increased understanding of oneself. For the students to begin to understand who they are and what their personality reflects, the first assessment they complete for this course is the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) assessment (Goldberg, 1999). The results from this assessment are utilized in class to discuss the association with the Five-Factor Model and traits. The Five-Factor Model, which is known to be “one of the most influential models in all of psychology” (McCrae, 2009, p. 148), and referred to as the Big Five, has had an unyielding impact within the field of personality psychology (Roberts & Yoon, 2022). However, research outside the United States has identified a potential sixth dimension, honesty (Costa et al., 2019; Roberts & Yoon, 2022). The Five-Factor Model, or Big Five personality traits, are identified in personality psychology and are often associated with the acronym OCEAN, which references O-openness to experience (curious or cautious), C-conscientiousness (organized or careless), E-extraversion (outgoing or solitary), A-agreeableness (compassionate or detached), and N-neuroticism (confident or nervous) in research (Costa et al., 2019; Gerras & Wong, 2016; Roberts & Yoon, 2022).

Openness describes individuals who are curious, imaginative, and creative, while those who are low in openness prefer routine and familiarity and tend to be more conservative in nature (Costa et al., 2019; Gerras & Wong, 2016; Roberts & Yoon, 2022). Individuals who are high in conscientiousness tend to be competent, orderly, and self-disciplined. However, those on the opposite end of the conscientiousness scale are laid-back, not disturbed with disorder or

untidiness, and not as goal-oriented. Individuals high on the extraversion scale respond to the external world with energetic engagement and tend to be assertive when needed. The agreeableness scale reflects those with elevated levels of social harmony to include areas of trust and altruism. Those found with low levels of agreeableness are cynical and restrained. Finally, the neuroticism scale reflects an individual's stress tolerance. Individuals who score high in neuroticism tend to exhibit a lower stress tolerance and become easily worried, tense, and discouraged, while those with low neuroticism exhibit high levels of adaptability and hopefulness, remaining unruffled with stress (Costa et al., 2019; Gerras & Wong, 2016). Researchers identified strong positive predictors of leadership, specifically in the dimensions of extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness (Costa et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2002). Gerras and Wong (2016) posited that successful military leaders similarly exhibited trait classifications of low neuroticism, high conscientiousness, and high levels of extraversion. As presented by Mathieu et al. (2019), research into teams identified that a member's attributes directly contribute to the team's performance based on an average of the team's combined conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion.

Trait

Research relating to trait-based leadership argues that trait theory is based on specific traits an individual possesses, often out of an individual's control, such as a person's gender or height. Trait theories support the idea that leaders are born with inherent qualities that make them leaders. The focus of trait theory centers on an individual possessing and exercising specific character and personality traits associated with a demonstration of successful leadership across various conditions. According to Mouton (2019), research into trait-based leadership has been loosely tied to the proposal of Carlyle's (1841) great man theory and the belief that some people

are born with innate qualities or traits that empower them to become leaders. The grounding premise of being born to lead or possessing innate abilities for leadership success has inspired researchers to delve further into inheritable traits and their relation to leadership (Mouton, 2019; Oakleaf, 2016). Spector (2016) described trait-based leadership as “a trait approach that emphasizes the extraordinary attributes that set effective leaders apart from less effective ones” (p. 251). Mouton (2019) posited that, from the perspective of “great men” traits, the leader is not the one who is drawing the followers, but it is the followers who are lifting the man to greatness through their assertions of leadership abilities. Oakleaf (2016) highlighted some specific traits that good leaders are thought to have. These traits included a heightened level of extroversion and self-confidence, physical height, the perception of being more honest, a tendency to be forward-looking or possess foresight, the ability to inspire themselves and others, and the portrayal of competence. While it would be easy to identify leaders if it were as simple as going down a checklist to identify some noticeable traits, trait theory is not without limitations. When considering various research related to trait theory, the traits identified by researchers were inconsistent and subjective, raising many questions and concerns associated with being able to identify successful leaders based on traits (Nichols, 2016). Leadership is a subjective and complex topic, and what one person may assess as success, another may view as failure.

An issue associated with trait-based leadership comes from sociology and how society views male versus the female role stereotypes. Gender roles tend to portray males as more dominant in both attitudes and behaviors, while females are taught to be passive and obedient. Males are taught to be competitive and take risks, while females are typically encouraged to be the cheerleader and err on the side of caution. Additionally, while men are encouraged to climb the corporate ladder and go for their goals, women are strongly encouraged to be supportive of

their spouses while having and raising their children (Cuddy et al., 2015; Oakleaf, 2016). While these gender stereotypes do still exist, they are not fixed rules; they are beliefs that are slowly changing. These trait-based ideas around gender roles still surface for students and faculty and can negatively contribute to the academic environment and learning culture.

In the 1840s, Thomas Carlyle delivered a lecture series addressing the role heroes play in shaping history, and this became what is now known as the great man theory. While many dismissed this way of thinking as religious-based ramblings and rhetoric, others found merit in his message (Mouton, 2019; Spector, 2016). In early military leadership and leadership research, leadership was thought to be a man's role due to the association with masculine virtues, including competitiveness, risk-taking, and a battle of wills (Frisk, 2019). There also exists a belief that leaders are born, not made, thus making them what is referred to in society as natural-born leaders. This belief is supported by Carlyle's conviction that heroes were appointed by God, and therefore, the task for non-heroes was to recognize the innate gifts and abilities of these appointed heroes and follow them as great men. Many of these appointed great men achieved their status and power by simply being born, not by achieving any notable successes to earn the respect or the position. Thus, it is significant to consider that individuals who were born into lower economic status and class experienced fewer, if any, opportunities to assume and practice any form of leadership role. This further propagated the belief that leadership was an innate ability that was bestowed on some but was not available or achievable by all (Mouton, 2019; Spector, 2016). Carlyle (1841, as cited in Mouton, 2019) stated, "The history of the world is but the biography of great men" (p. 81), and with a statement and belief like this, it is easy to see how many theorists have come to dismiss this approach to leadership due in part, or whole, to the sheer lack of inclusivity amongst not only gender but also socioeconomic classes and races as

well.

The research on heroes has been divided into four typological areas based on the analytical focus of either exclusive or inclusive and conceptual approach of either individuals or structures:

- Exclusive + Individuals = Great men
- Inclusive + Individuals = Acts of heroism
- Exclusive + Structures = Hero stories
- Inclusive + Structures = Hero institutions (Frisk, 2019).

Based on the association of the term hero to great men, the identifier of a great man has been associated with historically significant men, such as William Shakespeare, Abraham Lincoln, and even Steve Jobs, but the understanding of the heroes' role was viewed as the cause of transformation (Carlyle, 1841; Mouton, 2019) by some and for others, the heroic greatness had a distinct cause and effect on the surrounding society or an emphasis on being of increased intelligence (Mouton, 2019). Frisk (2019) highlighted the work of Campbell (1949), who acknowledged women as capable of being the hero, but earlier literature did not acknowledge this possibility. However, frequently this can be linked to the fact that the hero character is associated with physical strength, a trait not often associated with the female (Frisk, 2019).

Leadership 200

The sophomore-level core leadership course, *Leadership 200: Foundations for Interpersonal Leadership*, curriculum consists of the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM), power and influence in the FRLM, hierarchies and the psychological effects of power, influences and status processes, and power, influence, and diversity in leadership.

Full Range Leadership

Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership are the three leadership style typologies that make up the FRLM (Geier, 2016). Leadership research over the past couple of decades has been centralized around transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership. The focus of transformational leadership is organizational outcome based with an emphasis on the development of followers through the use of morality and motivation (Newman, 2019). Transformational leadership emphasizes the effect the leader has on the follower and includes four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass, 1996; Liborius, 2017). These four distinct factors allow leaders to focus on the specific needs of the follower and organization to help create and foster a harmonious balance for the success of the individual and the organization. Idealized influence can be categorized into both an attribute and a behavior (Voss, 2021). A leader who demonstrates the idealized influence attribute motivates respect and pride in those with whom they are associated, while the behavior focuses on conveying the purpose and values associated with the organization's mission and its importance. Idealized influence is achieved through the actions of a leader when they are role modeling a pursuit of goal achievement, demonstrating self-sacrificing behavior, and communicating purpose and expectations aligned with the organizational goals and vision (Liborius, 2017).

This theory focuses on the vision, values, and intellectual stimulation, empowering followers to commit to organizational objectives (Brown et al., 2005; Yukl, 1999).

Transformational leadership occurs when the leader focuses on the development of the follower and “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). The transformational leadership approach allows the follower to have a deeper understanding and

achieve a higher level of commitment, inspiring trust, unshakeable self-assurance, a convincing vision of the future, and awareness of greater commitment (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Bass and Avolio (2000) named four distinct factors that make up transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Inspirational motivation centers on an optimistic future state and enjoyment of achieving goals and forecasting hope. The assessment of a new outlook for resolving difficulties and completing tasks is the focus of intellectual stimulation. Individualized consideration directs focus on the followers by identifying individual needs for mentoring and development, thus ensuring specialized care and consideration for growth (Eagly et al., 2003). Voss (2021) highlighted that just because a leader is thought to be a transformational leader, does not necessarily mean they are a positive transformational leader.

Transactional Leadership. The focus of transactional leadership is on task completion through the use of authority, which is often characterized by a mutually beneficial exchange between parties, sometimes using rewards or punishments and seeking to carry out required organizational tasks (Newman, 2019). As a result of the need for mutual benefit, this approach typically only produces short-term results (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; Northouse, 2019). “The higher-order factor of transactional leadership included: contingent reward, active management by exception, and passive management by exception” (Hargis et al., 2011, p. 54). A contingent reward is an extrinsic or external motivation tool that encourages leaders to have their followers perform satisfactorily, thus resulting in the leader receiving a reward. Active management by exception leadership addresses the follower’s failures only in an effort to achieve the standard. Passive management by exception does not address failures until they become unavoidable and require leadership intervention (Eagly et al., 2003; Northouse, 2019).

Transactional leadership is responsive to the performance of the follower, and the leader intervenes in either a positive or negative way, meaning the leader is engaged with the followers and is present (Tejeda et al., 2001). While transactional leadership is a valid and useful leadership style, it is not viewed as the ideal approach to leadership in most organizations. However, it is preferred above the laissez-faire leadership approach.

Power and Influence

Leadership may be perceived as power, and power may be perceived as leadership; however, there is a distinct difference between the two. Research relating to power and influence-based leadership suggests that “Power is the capacity or potential to influence ... the ability to affect others’ beliefs, attitudes, and courses of action” (Northouse, 2019, p. 10).

Leadership is often associated with the concept of power and how it is used to affect change in others. Within the consideration of power and influence, one’s status can play a dynamic role. Status is deeply rooted in the external expectations of others and can range dimensionally across a broad spectrum (Grant & Shandell, 2022).

In researching the dynamics of social power across the developmental stages of adolescence, Gülgöz and Gelman (2017) highlighted the significance power dynamics played in shaping relationships among families and friends, even in the educational setting. This dynamic was also evident in the context and formation of social groups and could be seen in relation to race, social class, and even gender, thus showing up in the early stages of adolescence; “The ubiquity of power in social relationships, at both the individual and the group levels, implies that developing an understanding of social power is crucial for children to successfully navigate the social world” (Gülgöz & Gelman, 2017, p. 946). This need for children to not only develop an understanding of power but to successfully navigate the social nuances that surround it highlights

the complexities associated with social power and how early it can begin to shape an individual's character.

Leadership 300

The core leadership course designed to be completed during the students' junior year is *Leadership 300: Foundations for Team Leadership*, and the curriculum consists of leadership and the fate of the organization, the structure of culture, teams as complex systems and includes the structural features, compositional features, and mediating mechanisms of teams. Within this course, students are encouraged and offered the opportunity to explore various leadership approaches among their teams. The course is structured in a way that allows the teams to witness how others might lead and gauge the effectiveness of these leadership approaches in a controlled environment. This observational approach seeks to encourage the students to try various leadership styles and concepts to help them determine the behaviors and skills necessary for the culture and situation and to become a more authentic and effective leader. Perruci and Hall (2018) eloquently summed up the desired output of the course when they stated, "We want to pass on not only leadership knowledge and competencies but also the wisdom that goes with the responsibility of being leaders and followers in complex organizations and societies" (p. 15).

Authentic Leadership Theory

Authentic leadership, according to Luthans and Avolio (2003), focuses on leaders possessing a high sense of self-awareness and their beliefs aligning with their values, which highlights the leader's character. Voss (2021) further elaborated on this definition and suggested that these leaders have been identified as authentic when they have a solid foundation and are able to align how they demonstrate their values and beliefs, fostering a reflexive culture (Lyubovnikova et al., 2017; Voss, 2021). Being authentic means being one's true or real self, and

the concept of authenticity can be traced back to early Greek philosophy. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, stressed the importance of staying true to oneself, which begins with knowing oneself (Johnson, 2019). Authentic leadership theory, championed by Professor Bill George (2003) from Harvard University, focuses on achieving positive results through the application of authentic and humanistic principles while being one's true self. Authentic leadership theory identified five basic dimensions of authentic leadership: (a) understanding their *purpose*, (b) having strong *values* about the right thing to do, (c) establishing trusting *relationships* with others, (d) demonstrating *self-discipline* and acting on their values, and (e) being passionate (*heart*) about their mission; and those who lead authentically do so with a moral and ethical purpose (The Leadership Institute, 2020). Each of these dimensions relates to specific characteristics that can be further developed to achieve authentic leadership: purpose requires passion, values link to behavior, relationships associate with connectedness, self-discipline needs consistency, and heart involves compassion (Northouse, 2019). Unlike traditional leadership theories, authentic leadership can be applied with a variety of leadership styles. Three influential factors play a role in the development process of an authentic leader: positive psychological capabilities, moral reasoning, and critical life events (Benner, 2015; Voss, 2021).

Behavioral

Research relating to behavioral-based leadership tells us that leadership is a skill, and it is up to the individual to take action to develop that skill through learning and observations. The behavioral-based theories center on the belief that leaders are made and the skills to lead can be learned and developed, contradicting the premise of trait theory, which is centered on the belief that some individuals are born leaders. This approach to leadership aligns with the development approach to teaching leadership concepts from a psychological perspective to enhance one's

understanding of leadership. Cherry (2019) highlighted and explained 16 behavioral-based leadership traits, which are most often associated with great leadership:

1. Intelligence and action-oriented judgment: Great leaders are smart and make choices that move the group forward.
2. Eagerness to accept responsibility: Strong leaders take on responsibility and do not pass the blame on to others. They stand by their success and take ownership of their mistakes.
3. Task competence: A great leader is skilled and capable. Members of the group are able to look to the leader for an example of how things should be done.
4. Understanding their followers and their needs: Effective leaders pay attention to group members and genuinely care about helping them succeed. They want each person in the group to succeed and play a role in moving the entire group forward.
5. People skills: Excellent interpersonal skills are essential for leading effectively.
6. A need for achievement: Strong leaders have a need to succeed and help the group achieve its goals.
7. Capacity to motivate people: A great leader knows how to inspire others and motivate them to do their best.
8. Courage and resolution: The best leaders are brave and committed to the goals of the group. They do not hide from challenges.
9. Perseverance: Strong leaders stick with it, even when things get difficult or the group faces significant obstacles.
10. Trustworthiness: Group members need to be able to depend upon and trust the person leading them.

11. Decisiveness: A great leader is capable of making a decision and is confident in his or her choices.
12. Self-Confidence: Many of the best leaders are extremely self-assured. Because they are confident in themselves, followers often begin to share this self-belief.
13. Assertiveness: A great leader is able to be direct and assertive without coming off as overly pushy or aggressive.
14. Adaptability and flexibility: Effective leaders do not get stuck in a rut. They are able to think outside of the box and adapt quickly to changing situations.
15. Emotional stability: In addition to being dependable overall, strong leaders are able to control their emotions and avoid overreactions.
16. Creativity: Perhaps most importantly, great leaders not only possess their own creativity, but they are also able to foster creativity among members of the group.

Behavioral psychology, or behaviorism, is a theory based on conditioning or the idea that behaviors have been learned by our interactions with others and nature (Krapfl, 2016). A consistent theme regarding behaviors continues to ring true throughout the literature, and four distinct categories have been identified in which behaviors can be grouped: task-oriented behaviors, relational-oriented behaviors, change-oriented behaviors, and passive leadership (DeRue et al., 2011). Task-oriented behaviors are behaviors that align with transactional leadership, most specifically focusing on achieving the task through the use of contingent reward or active management by exception. Relational-oriented behaviors can be found in similar research on empowerment, participative leadership, and democratic leadership. According to research, change-oriented behaviors focus on change by providing a vision, encouraging, seeking out innovative ideas and solutions, and not being afraid to take risks, aligning with

transformational leadership (DeRue et al., 2011). Finally, passive leadership is similar to that of the laissez-faire leadership approach and centers more around the inaction of the leader. This lack of leadership engagement is still viewed as a leadership behavior (Avolio et al., 1999; DeRue et al., 2011).

Skills

While traits are viewed as the innate characteristics a person possesses, skills are identified as what a person is able to accomplish. Katz (1955) defined three personal skills that are related to effective leadership. These skills are technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. Technical skills are the skills related specifically to proficiency and knowledge associated with specialized areas of the job or activity. These skills are typically associated with the ability to work with things, such as producing a product, the execution of specific hands-on duties, or even the ability to think and apply analytical thought. In the Air Force, those who possess these skills are considered subject-matter experts (SMEs). Skills of a technical nature are typically more important to lower and middle management personnel. Human skills are skills specifically related to working the others. These skills are associated with providing support to the leader to assist team members in working toward and achieving a shared objective by helping to foster trust. These skills contribute to an environment of support, enhance motivation, and provide support within the decision-making process. These skills are beneficial at all levels of leadership. Conceptual skills are the skills associated with ideas. Individuals with conceptual skills are able to understand and communicate abstract ideas and organizational vision and think in terms of strategic planning. While these skills can be beneficial at all levels, they are more significant for top-level managers and leaders (Northouse, 2019).

While Katz's research was conducted in the mid-1950s, it laid a foundation for the

formulations of the mid-1990s skill-based model of leadership. Mumford et al. (2000) framed skills-based leadership around an individual's capabilities, which are derived from the knowledge and skills they possess. Five components make up the skill-based model, and each of these components consists of associated skills. The first model component is competencies and includes problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. The second component is individual attributes, containing general cognitive ability, crystallized cognitive ability, motivation, and personality. The third component is leadership outcomes and includes effective problem-solving and performance. The fourth and fifth components are career experiences and environmental influences, which can include internal or external factors.

At the heart of the model are three competencies: *problem-solving skills*, *social judgment skills*, and *knowledge*. These three competencies are the central determinants of effective problem solving and performance, although individual attributes, career experiences, and environmental influences all have impacts on leader competencies. (Northouse, 2019, p. 56)

It is important to note that this model highlights specific skills that can be improved through training and experience. The ecological system approach plays a role in the development of skills through the components of career experiences and environmental factors.

Situational

Research relating to situational-based leadership has become one of the most widely recognized leadership approaches since it was introduced by Hersey and Blanchard (1969). Chatalalsingh and Reeves (2014) highlighted the two broad classifications of team leader behavior based on situational leadership; task behavior, “the extent to which leaders engage in unidirectional communication by explaining what each follower is to do, as well as

when/where/how tasks are to be accomplished,” and relationship behavior, “the extent to which a leader engages in a more open communication style by providing support and personal encouragement based on the individual’s needs to complete the task” (p. 514). The research of Hersey and Blanchard (1993) pared down these wide-ranging approaches into four specific and situationally-driven categories: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. While situational leadership has undergone revisions over the past few decades, its focus remains true to the name and centers on situationally-based leadership. Situational-based leadership is made up of directive and supportive dimensions of application and will be dictated based on the needs of the situation. Directive behaviors are goal-focused through the use of goal setting, establishing evaluative measures, defining roles, issuing directions, and establishing timelines. This is typically communicated through the use of one-way communication and establishes the context of who, what, and how of task accomplishment. Supportive behaviors tend to center around two-way communication that helps establish a team where individuals feel comfortable through a show of social and emotional support.

Blanchard’s (1985) Situational Leadership II model captures leadership styles that consist of four distinct categories of leadership based on the level of directive and supportive behaviors. Style one (S1) is the directing style of leadership and is a high directive-low supportive style. The coaching approach is style two (S2) and is both high-directive and high-supportive. Style three (S3) is the supportive approach and, as the name implies, is a style with high-supportive and low-directive behaviors. Lastly, style four (S4) is the delegating approach and consists of a low supportive-low directive style. In addition to the leadership style, this model also captures the developmental levels of the follower. From right to left, the levels of development are identified as D1 (low competence, high commitment); D2 (low to some competence, low

commitment); D3 (moderate to high competence, variable commitment); and D4 (high competence, high commitment). This model aligns each of the styles of leadership with a development level of followers; therefore, a leader can choose to adjust their situational leadership approach based on the developmental level of their followers (Northouse, 2019).

Effective Leadership

Lindsay et al. (2020) provided a succinct explanation to answer the question of what effective leadership is, stating, “Effective leadership considers the characteristics of the individual combined with their actions” (p. 22). The fundamental influence of others through a changed direction toward the development of collective activities is viewed as both successful and effective leadership (Zaccaro, 2007). The process of leadership influences the behavior of humans toward an organizational goal, and leaders have a duty and responsibility to remain in tune with the needs of subordinates on an emotional level regarding human needs. It is the leader’s charge to know and understand that each individual is unique and offers a diverse set of skills, has various needs, and will exhibit different limitations than their coworkers (Dinse & Sheehan, 1998).

Mary Louise Anderson addressed the House of Delegates of the American Pharmacists Association about leadership. In this speech, she addressed what being an effective leader looked like from her perspective, from her role, and from her experience. She described leadership as a lonely place, which was somewhere between what was and what shall be, and leaders must be intentional about how they choose to move from this lonely place because the decisions that would be needed would not be popular or safe. Instead, they would need to be risky to change the status quo and attitudes to create the world the followers and the organization deserved (Engaging the Power of Community, 2016). “No longer is leadership about developing charisma,

emulating other leaders, looking good externally, and acting in one's self-interest" (Newman, 2019, p. 11). Leaders are called to be pioneers, not to simply walk in front of others, but to inspire them to want to follow in their footsteps, to be the change that others seek, and to live their personal values as a positive example for others to emulate; a trailblazer, leading with character. Being an effective leader goes beyond the position or title held or even the rank worn. Effective leadership requires an ability to bring people together from diverse backgrounds and experiences with varied abilities, training, and personalities, turning them into a productive and functioning team (Dinse & Sheehan, 1998; Lindsay et al., 2020; & Newman, 2019).

Character

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (B119) is credited with writing "êthos anthrôpôi daimôn," when translated, means *character for humans is a divinity* and suggests that humans are in control of and shape their own future through their response to the world around them. Guo et al. (2020) defined a person's character as "the integration of the person's characteristics that make him/her distinct from other people" (p. 5). While the nature of one's character has been a philosophical focus for over 2,000 years and featured in works of Heraclitus, Aristotle, and other historically significant philosophers, character research as it relates to the social sciences has only been conducted for less than a century (Aristotle, 350 BCE; Berkowitz et al., 2017; Hartshorne & May, 1928). Within the social science field of study, there is not an agreed-upon definition of character, much less an approach to developing character. The early years of psychology focused on the understanding of learning principles and treatment approaches relating to mental disorders with a strict emphasis on overt actions and behaviors associated with humans and animals. Progressively the field of study began to include cognitive research focusing on the perception, attention, memory, and decision-making of individuals. It was only

recently, within the past couple of decades, that character research has been added to the conversation and included as an area of research in the psychological field. Researchers such as Drs. Christopher Peterson, Martin Seligman, Michael Matthews, and colleagues have expanded the research and discussion in the realm of character and the significant role it plays not only within leadership development, but in human understanding and interactions. Their research has been vital in the identification and classification of character, along with the creation and validation of tools for measuring, developing, and understanding the role character plays in resiliency, trust formation, leadership development, and more. Furthermore, organizations, including corporations, universities, and even militaries, have begun to incorporate assessments and developmental strategies for character into the selection of employees and students. They are further incorporating this knowledge and approach into their training and educational programs to ensure character is an integral component of the development of their employees and students (Caslen & Matthews, 2020).

When addressing the importance of character, Caslen and Matthews (2020) identified a list of leaders throughout history who they deemed some of the most successful, including "Aristotle, Joan of Arc, Lincoln, Gandhi, Marie Curie, Martin Luther King, Jr., MacArthur" the authors went on to say, "their mastery of their field was important to their success. But it wasn't the secret to their highly effective leadership. Their skills, grit, resiliency, charisma, courage, and credibility all emanated from one thing: their strength of character" (p. 2). The character of a leader, according to Bass and Bass (2008), "involves his or her ethical and moral beliefs, intentions, and behaviors" (p. 219), which are suggested to be linked with virtuous traits. Caslen and Matthews (2020) further stressed the importance of a strong character foundation in association with successful leadership achievement; the authors emphasized that even when the

individual possessed raw talent and competence, without a strong character foundation, it was inefficient. Ramos et al. (2019) noted an association between the development of virtuous (behaviors, cognitions, and motivations) character and adulthood feelings of well-being, prosocial behaviors, and civic engagements.

The ever-increasing need for leadership development, not only in the workplace but also in a global context, drives the continual need for leadership and character development and drives a need for such programs to be aligned with character attributes (Callina & Lerner, 2017; Sturm et al., 2017). According to Caslen and Matthews (2020), it is important to not only teach others about character and lead discussions on the use of positive character in relation to personal and organizational goal achievement, but leaders must also allow time for subordinates to self-assess and reflect on their own character to achieve positive results. Thus, aligning with the big three factors psychologist have identified with shaping character: “(a) positive and sustained mentoring, (b) skill-building curricula and training, and (c) leadership opportunities” (Caslen & Matthews, 2020, p. 185). King (1997) stated, “When students find out that the college ... is committed to helping them lead reflective, ethical lives, and expects and encourages them to participate in character education programs that will help them become active, responsible citizens” (p. 88) and highlighted that this process by which character is developed is linked to increased tension due to currently held personal beliefs about their current character being challenged. This tension can create an obstacle for these students within their required leadership core courses and their role in the process of being developed into Leaders of Character.

Character System

The NASEM (2017) provided a breakdown of the components of character as associated with a dynamic system consisting of four components: moral cognition, emotional development

or moral mental health, performance, and moral social engagement. Character development is critical, and, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, “To educate a man [person] in mind and not in morals [character] is to educate a menace to society” (NASEM, 2017, p. 13).

Moral Cognition. The first component within the defined character system is moral cognition, and it is stated that “The essence of character is the willful decision to act morally,” which may or may not require a great deal of contemplation (NASEM, 2017, p. 9). When it comes to moral judgement, however, there are extenuating circumstances and considerations. One must take into consideration the norms that exist within society, or social conventions and elements of confidentiality and influences connected to individual contemplation.

Emotional Development. The second component identified in the character system is expressing empathy and weighing the decisions and judgments of others (NASEM, 2017). It is important to ensure character development allows personnel to develop the capability for learning within the social and emotional realms.

Performance. Performance is the third component, speaking to one’s ability to know what the right thing is and to follow-through with the actions to ensure the right thing happens. One must understand that doing the right thing morally may come at a personal cost, yet still be willing to do the morally right thing.

Social Engagement. Finally, the fourth and final component takes into consideration the social constructs beyond the individual to determine the big picture. Those with high moral character participate as moral agents for changing the social construct to align with morality.

Developing Leaders of Character

Developing character is an inspiring concept and goes beyond labeling those thought to possess or demonstrate qualities associated with good character (Callina et al., 2017). To develop

leaders of character, it is essential to understand both the terms *develop* and *character*. The process of development is not something that happens overnight. Quite the contrary, development takes time and should be a lifelong undertaking and result in behavioral improvement that can be measured qualitatively (Lindsay et al., 2020). Heuertz (2017) provided insight into defining character by providing the origin of the English word from the Greek meaning “engraving into stone” (p. 30). The word χαρακτήρ appeared in the Greek publication of Hebrews 1:3, and the English translated verse stated, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the *express image* of his person... [emphasis added]” (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017). The Greek word χαρακτήρ, which is defined as “instrument used for engraving” and means character, is translated to read “express image” (Biblehub.com, 2020). Therefore, to reveal one’s character, one must go through a process of being developed and changed in a way that reveals what is underneath.

According to Callina et al. (2017), “An individual’s character attributes ... depend on the ongoing coactions between the individual and his or her environment” (p. 12). Patching (2007) stated, “There is a direct link between culture and character” and continued with “the degree to which you influence culture ... is a measure of your leadership effectiveness” (p. 176), which highlights the importance of character development to the ability to lead effectively. Building a positive community, involvement in service-learning, and participation in guided moral discussions have been favorably linked with individual character development, aligning with research findings that identify three specific areas for achieving success in character development, “mentors and models, skill-building opportunities, and opportunities to participate in and to take a leadership role in valued family, school, and community activities” (Lerner, 2018, p. 267). To be effective, leaders can take an active approach in ensuring their personnel

have mentors both inside and outside of the office. This can be accomplished through formal or informal channels (Boerma et al., 2017). Skill-building is important for developing individuals, both on the job and beyond, and does not have to be limited to specific job-related tasks but can include leadership, resiliency, personal finance, time management, and social media marketing skills, to name a few.

Building these types of skills can have a significant contribution to the overall well-being of the individual, thus having secondary or tertiary benefits for the company (Bates et al., 2018). Offering opportunities for the students to serve, within their academic environment, in informal and formal roles of leadership can allow members to feel as if the skills they bring to the team are valued and recognized. These roles can range in levels of importance based on the skill level and ability of the individual; however, it is ideal to find a way to capitalize on an individual's strength and offer opportunities that align with their strength areas (Haber-Curran et al., 2018). While these approaches are more beneficial when used in the long-term approach, they can still be successful when introduced and used consistently. If humans are in control and shape the future through their responses, actions, and behaviors, developing leaders of character is essential, as these future leaders will influence and shape those who are charged to lead. Research suggests that versatility in leaders can be achieved through character development, allowing them to be more adaptive in the context of leadership and in varied leadership situations (Newman, 2019).

The Leaders of Character Framework

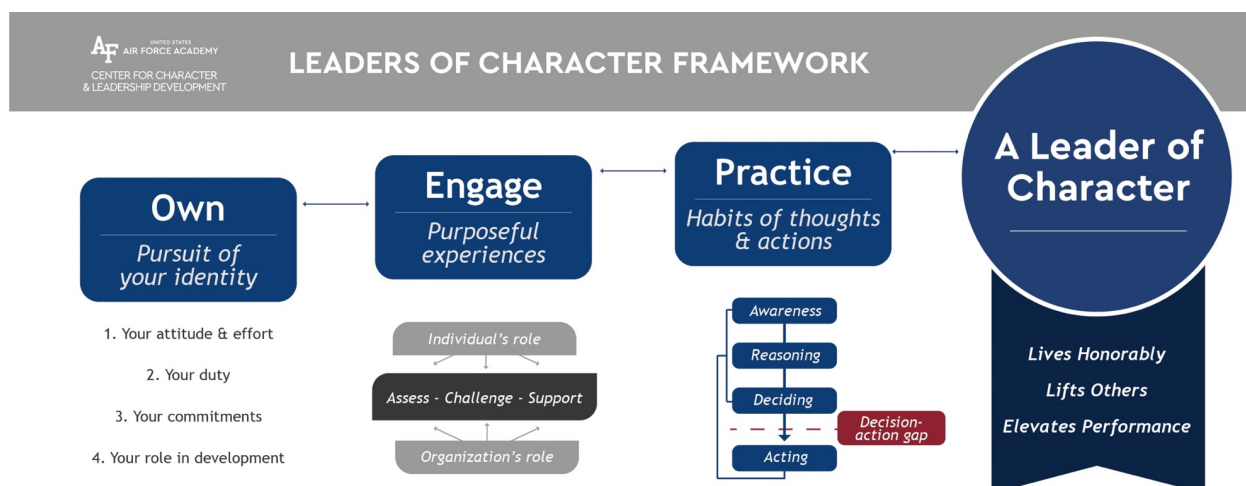
The Center for Character and Leadership Development, through the use and combination of Air Force Doctrine, and the theories of character education and transformational leadership, developed a framework that specifically defined a *leader of character* as an individual who

“*lives honorably* by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Air Force core values [integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do], *lifts others* to their best possible selves, and *elevates performance* toward a common and noble purpose [emphasis added]” (Lindsay et al., 2020, p. 24). These three criteria of the framework are aligned with what a leader of character does or the actions in which they take.

Bluteau et al. (2017) stated, “The process of ‘becoming’ and how students’ identities are shaped, formed and continually flex in response to demands and ubiquitous change is a fascinating and challenging proposition for education providers responsible for preparing students for practice” (p. 420). The Leaders of Character Framework also includes the three aspects involved in the developmental process and includes own, engage, and practice (see Figure 2). The framework starts with *own the pursuit of your identity*, which includes owning attitude and effort, duty, commitments, and role in development.

Figure 2

Leaders of Character Framework



Sanders (2019) highlighted that an individual must own their firsthand experiences

because the expression of self is derived from the inner thoughts and feelings of the true self. An individual's experiences may consist of one's beliefs, thoughts, needs, and emotions; thus, the need to own one's pursuit of identity involves the evolution and growth as an authentic leader. This moves to engage in purposeful experiences. Included in this is alignment of the individual's role and the organization's role through assessment, challenges, and support. The next layer includes the practice of habits, thoughts, and actions and requires awareness, reasoning, deciding, and acting. Through this process, a decision-action gap allows individuals to exercise their character and commitments to assess and reflect on their actions (or inactions) (CCLD, 2011). Character development through this model is not a linear path, and individuals may move across the framework, engage, and practice layers differently based on their own firsthand experiences and understanding of the framework. Farrington (2017) argued that the development of character is based on experience and the meaning derived from the experience; thus, character development is not a linear process but allows for flexibility.

Summary

This chapter provided a conceptual framework and review of the literature surrounding curriculum alignment, leadership, and character development. The review of the literature focused on the areas of curriculum, leadership, and character. This chapter included a look at some of the areas relating to curriculum, including curriculum design, alignment, and assessment. Additionally, leadership theories and research with a focus on behavioral, trait, personality, skills, power and influence, situational, effective, and full-range leadership were examined and discussed. Finally, character research discussed developing leaders of character, leadership and character development, power and character development, and character systems. While these are just a few of the theories and scholarly studies regarding curriculum, leadership,

and character development, it is important to note that many other theories and research projects exist, but a full review and analysis of all this data would not be feasible.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to improve the alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The problem was the current core leadership curriculum has undergone significant changes over the past several years to include leadership, format, and structure, which has significantly impacted the alignment within these courses. This chapter presents the design of the study, the site of the study, permission to conduct the study, the participants who will inform the study, the researcher's role, and ethical considerations. This chapter also presents design, research questions, the site description, the participants, the researcher's role, the interview questions and procedures, documents procedures, and survey questions and procedures.

Design

The design of this applied study was a multimethod research design, which utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. This design approach allowed for data analysis and first-hand feedback from those designing and delivering the curriculum, instructor accounts and assessments of alignment, and products from historical curriculum approaches. The multimethod approach "is a research paradigm that combines specific positivistic elements of quantitative research methods with specific constructivist elements of qualitative research methods" (Kitchenham, 2010, p. 561). Kitchenham (2010) also stated that multimethod research allows information to be analyzed in new ways; "qualitative data can be *quantitized* or quantitative data can be *qualitized* to extract meaning from the data sets that might otherwise be hidden" (p. 562). The multimethod approach allows research to be combined in new ways to bring to light data that might otherwise go unanalyzed and unresearched, thus

adding to the existing body of literature. Bickman and Rog (2009) stated, “Flexibility to use both the qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods allows the applied researcher or evaluator to answer his or her research questions in the most effective manner” (p. 3). One purpose for using the multimethod research approach is triangulation. Triangulation sought to combine research data to develop common codes and themes from differing methods using three forms of data. “This strategy reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops” (Bickman & Rog, 2009, p. 32). For this applied dissertation, three data collection approaches are utilized. Interviews provided a qualitative approach to data collection, document review yielded a qualitative review of historical data, and departmental surveys provided a quantitative measure. Each of these approaches sought to inform the problem of alignment of curriculum within the core leadership courses.

Research Questions

Central Question: How can curriculum alignment be improved in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Sub-question 1: How would instructors in an interview address the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Sub-question 2: How would a review of documents inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Sub-question 3: How would quantitative survey data inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?

Site

The educational site for this study was a four-year undergraduate military academy

located in the Midwestern United States. The mission of this military academy is “To educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead” (USAFA, 2020). The institution serves approximately 4,000 residential undergraduate students. This military academy is comprised of four divisions: Basic Sciences Division, Engineering Division, Humanities Division, and Social Sciences Division, and offers 31 majors and 11 minors. The leadership core courses are offered through the Social Sciences Division in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership (DFBL). The leadership core curriculum is broken up across the first three academic years, which allows the curriculum to be tailored to the current leadership levels and expectations throughout the academic experience. The core leadership courses are taught by a team of eight DFBL faculty and various associate faculty from other departments across the installation. The diversity of the 2021 to 2022 academic year for the instructor core contains five males and three females, five who hold doctorate degrees, one who holds a specialist degree, and two who hold a master’s degree. One instructor is African American, and seven are European American. In the 2020 to 2021 academic year, the core leadership courses had a total of 3,333 students enrolled across 114 course offerings. The 42 first-year leadership courses had 1,149 students enrolled; the 36 sophomore courses consisted of 1,109 students; and the 36 junior-level courses had a total of 1,075 students.

Participants

The instructor participants for the interviews in this applied study included seven of the current eight core leadership instructors. This population represented approximately 56% of the core instructor population. The participant selection to be utilized for the faculty was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of sampling in which “select cases based on their availability for the study and ease of data collection” are utilized (Bickman & Rog,

2009, p, 23). The sample size allowed for most of the instructors to be interviewed and provide information concerning the leadership core curriculum and how they would solve the problem of alignment within the leadership courses.

The surveys were provided to all department and guest instructors who were teaching department-specific courses, including both the behavioral sciences courses and the Leadership 100, 200, and 300 courses. The purposeful sampling approach was used because those assigned to teach in the department-offered courses could purposefully inform the problem identified for this applied research (Claxton & Michael, 2021). The total number of surveys used was based on the number of surveys completed and returned and on the quality of the data provided.

The Researcher's Role

Gloria Kuzmicki currently teaches leadership at a military academy located in the Midwest. She formally taught within the academic environment for the past 2 years but taught in the training environment for over 14 years. Her education includes a bachelor's degree from Grand Canyon University, two bachelor's degrees from Arizona State University, and a Master of Arts and Education Specialist degree from Liberty University. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education degree from Liberty University with an emphasis in curriculum and instruction. Previously, Gloria served as the superintendent of base onboarding at Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, New Mexico. Her superintendent position provided the opportunity to make suggestions to base leadership, shape curriculum, and provide training for all newly arriving personnel. As a leadership instructor, she is motivated to improve curriculum alignment. Since Gloria is currently employed by the school within the institution, she acknowledges that bias and assumptions may have been present considering the research. One bias to note is that Gloria believes that not all instructors will find value or necessity in aligning the leadership

curriculum. To ensure the integrity of the research and to allow the literature review, data collection, and analysis results to drive the recommendations being made in this study, it is crucial for biases to be bracketed out.

Procedures

Permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was sought and obtained prior to solicitation of participants and any data collection, interviews, or surveys (see Appendix A for site approval). Written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership department head as the key gatekeeper (see Appendix B for permission request letter and permissions). Consent for interview participants and survey participants was completed and collected prior to solicitation of the information. All interview participants were provided a copy of their statement of consent along with a brief description of what the interview data were used to achieve. All survey participants were able to print and/or save a copy of their statement of consent via the web before completion of the survey data. No data were collected until after a successful proposal defense and permission from the IRB was granted.

Data Collection and Analysis

This applied study utilized three data collection approaches. The first approach was qualitative, in the form of structured interviews. The second approach was qualitative, in the form of documents. The third, and final, approach was quantitative, in the form of surveys.

Interviews

The first sub-question for this study explored how instructors in an interview would improve the alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. Seidman (2007) stated, “Recounting narratives of experience has been the major

way throughout recorded history that humans have made sense of their experience” (p. 8). This study required the information collected from multiple instructors to be the same; therefore, the structured interview was used for data collection (Bickman & Rog, 2009). The interviewer utilized a predesignated set of questions to guide the interview process. This list of questions directly addressed the topic of curriculum alignment in core leadership courses. The following questions were asked:

1. Based on your understanding of the course, describe how effective the lesson objectives communicate what the student should know upon completion of the lesson? Please explain your response.

This question sought to gain an understanding from the instructor point of view regarding the effectiveness of the lesson objectives in communicating what is to be learned from the lesson. This specific question starts at the lesson-level of alignment. According to Kennedy (2006), when consideration is made for the development of learning outcomes, one must seek to align them with what the student is expected to know and be able to do with the material being presented.

2. Based on your understanding of the course, describe how effectively the assessments measure what the student has learned in the course? Please explain your response.

The effectiveness of course assessments must be well-thought-out to ensure the course material intended to be learned is actually being learned. Therefore, consideration was made regarding how the information being taught in the classroom is to be demonstrated and measured through the assessment process in order to gauge expected knowledge gained (Kennedy, 2006).

3. Based on your understanding of the course, describe how effective the course objectives communicate what the student should know upon completion of the course? Please explain your response.

While the above question focused on the lesson objectives, this question sought to ensure the overall course objectives. Again, the focus was on the consideration for development of outcomes that align the expected student knowledge and ability gained, as previously discussed for question one (Kennedy, 2006). Consideration was made for the alignment of both course and lesson objectives.

4. Describe how the learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, and course assessments align with...

Shaltry (2020) defined internal alignment as a need to consider three elements: “teaching and learning activities, assessments, and objectives” (p. 658). Therefore, alignment of these three elements was measured across the course, department, and organizational levels.

- a. The Leaders of Character framework?

The definition of leaders of character, as identified in the framework, needs to be understood both for internal alignment and external alignment within the curriculum.

Additionally, instructors need to understand and align their definition of leader of character with the institutional expectation. Shaltry (2020) stated:

the effects of misalignment often manifest in three ways: within a course, between courses/programs, and beyond the school in which a course resides ... this could result in a disadvantage for students when attempting to learn new concepts and skills. (p. 659)

- b. The (Leadership, Teamwork, Organizations, and Management) LTOM Learning Outcome and PITO Model?

The organization has established outcomes toward the institutional goal of developing leaders of character through an integrated developmental experience. The proficiencies associated with the LTOM outcome aligns with the PITO model of developing personal, interpersonal, team and organizational leadership (Outcomes, 2021).

- c. DFBLs Learning Outcomes?

Tyler's Rationale (1949) posited questioning how educational experiences could be organized in an effective manner. The DFBL Learning Outcomes identify the expected learning outcomes and what the student should be able to do based on the established learning expectation. Therefore, it was essential to consider the external alignment of the course(s) to ensure both internal and external alignment is being accomplished organized under the behavioral sciences approach to leadership.

- d. The other DFBL Leadership courses (100/200/300)?

Once internal alignment has been achieved the core leadership courses across all levels can be externally aligned, which included a need for shared language or definition of the foundational area of the course, leadership (Shaltry, 2020).

5. What is working well in the course you teach (specific strengths)?

External organizations, including future employers, assess academic success through the successful completion of courses (and degrees) and the grades received in these courses. There is an assumption that through the successful completion of a course, as reflected by a passing grade, the student has successfully developed the skills and objectives of the course. Since this

course is a core requirement for graduation an assumption could be made that leadership and character development has been successfully achieved (Shaltry, 2020).

6. What evidence do you have to support this?

The assumption that leadership and character development have been successfully achieved should be validated through an identified measure of success. It is important to note that evidence, especially when aligned, provides valuable insights external to the course and can be used in the accreditation process and beyond to promote additional collaboration (Shaltry, 2020). Therefore, evidence supporting the specific strengths of the course informs the current alignment and help inform opportunities for further alignment within and outside the course.

7. How would you improve the current course you teach (specific areas of improvement)?

This question sought to identify improvement opportunities identified by various instructors in the course. Themes identified from the responses provided areas for further consideration. In order to meet the institutional mission, each instructor has an ethical and social obligation to ensure they deliver course material that aligns with the Air Force's core value of excellence. Marques (2019) focused on findings that support an emphasis on social responsibility, as well as ethical and socially responsible behaviors. Naming specific areas of improvement supports these findings and is beneficial in the developmental process.

8. How would you improve the integration of the course you teach with the other two leadership courses (improved flow)?

This question sought to identify how instructors across all three levels of the course identify and suggest improvements for enhancing a more cohesive and aligned curriculum within their own course, but more importantly, across the three levels of leadership. "An aim of

alignment is to ensure courses are designed to clearly and accurately communicate to students what they will learn and to outside stakeholders what has been learned” (Shaltry, 2020, p. 663).

9. What is your definition of leadership?

There is no one agreed-upon definition of leadership in research; therefore, the responses to this question are essential in guiding this research based on how leadership is being presented within the context of each course based on the students’ current developmental processes. This question helped identify themes amongst the instructors to ensure no disconnects in defining leadership and providing an understanding and alignment of efforts. Alignment efforts to ensure a shared definition of leadership will need to align internally to the level of learning. Shaltry (2020) defined internal alignment as a need to consider three elements: “teaching and learning activities, assessments, and objectives” (p. 658). Once internal alignment has been achieved, the core leadership courses across all levels can be externally aligned, which includes a need for shared language or definition of the foundational area of the course, leadership.

10. What is your definition of character?

As discussed above, the definition of character has not been agreed-upon across all disciplines, including academics. To align with both internal and external demands of the core leadership curriculum, a shared language and understanding of character must be established for discussion and comparison across the courses (Shaltry, 2020). The organizational mission is to develop leadership of character; therefore, it is essential to understand the instructors’ personal definitions of character and work toward an agreed-upon definition within the courses that support and align with the department and organization’s definition of character.

11. Is there anything you would like to add to this discussion?

This question served as a summary opportunity for the interviewer and an opportunity to address any additional thoughts or concerns the instructors may have regarding the course, department, or organizational-defined expectation or alignment within their course and across the other leadership courses offered in the department.

The formatted structure of this interview process allowed each participant to answer the same set of questions, thus allowing the data to be considered from multiple participant viewpoints across all three levels of leadership development. Due to the demanding nature of capturing spoken interactions, interviews were conducted face-to-face with the participants, and a digital dictation application was used for transcription purposes with the consent of the participant (Jucker et al., 2018). The purpose of these interviews was to understand the instructors' lived experiences within the core leadership classes and utilize their experiences to examine how they made meaning of these experiences to improve alignment within the core leadership courses (Shepherd & Horner, 2010).

Interviews, according to Seidman (2007), present “an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). Interview data were analyzed to ensure sufficiency, “sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants and sites that make up the population so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect to the experiences of those in it” (Seidman, 2007, p. 55). Data were also analyzed for saturation. To ensure sufficiency and not oversaturate the data, seven instructors were interviewed. Interviews were transcribed, coded, and categorized into themes as identified for improving the alignment of the core leadership courses. Data were classified, meaning that any data which was found to be “interesting” was labeled and placed into corresponding files (Seidman, 2007). This allowed for reoccurring experiences or themes to be identified and

addressed accordingly. To assist with and enhance the analysis of the data, some specific words (and derivatives) were identified and used for coding and organization. The researcher started with the following words: align(ment), assess(ment), character, coach(ing), curriculum, develop(ment), follower(ship), goal(s), honor, honor code, leader(ship), learn(ing), mentor(ship), objective(s), outcome(s), principle(s), and theory. The use of coding, according to Creswell (2013), assists researchers in evaluating word-based records and organizing them into logical sequence(s).

Documents

The second sub-question for this study explored how a review of documents would inform the alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. According to Bowen (2009), the use of documents in qualitative research allows the researcher to analyze the documents and use the interpretations to provide meaning and/or voice the assessment topic. A review of historical documents, feedback, and assignment data was a qualitative data collection approach that sought to gather information on the topic through the identification of themes found in the data. Written documents were an effective data source due to accessibility and timeliness (O’Leary, 2014). O’Leary’s (2014) 8-step planning process was utilized in the document analysis:

1. Create a list of texts to explore (e.g., population, samples, respondents, participants).
2. Consider how texts will be accessed with attention to linguistic or cultural barriers.
3. Acknowledge and address biases.
4. Develop appropriate skills for research.
5. Consider strategies for ensuring credibility.
6. Know the data one is searching for.

7. Consider ethical issues (e.g., confidential documents).
8. Have a backup plan.

Document data were analyzed through the emergence of themes. The analysis process involved not only identifying themes within the documents but also assessing for the construction of categories within the themes (Bowen, 2009). Bowen (2009) further stated that it is important to consider themes from and across various documents sources as they may “integrate data gathered by different methods ... evaluating documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced, and understanding is developed” (pp. 32-33). Reviewing historical documents provided a more in-depth look into the current and previous approaches used in the core leadership curriculum allowing for a wider array of queries and responses. As with the interview data, the document review data also used the following words (and derivatives) to assist with and enhance the analysis for coding and organizational purposes: align(ment), assess(ment), character, coach(ing), curriculum, develop(ment), follower(ship), goal(s), honor, honor code, leader(ship), learn(ing), mentor(ship), objective(s), outcome(s), principle(s), and theory.

Survey Procedures

The third approach used to collect data in this study was a quantitative survey. This approach explored how survey data from department faculty informed the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The survey was developed in a structured response format using closed-ended Likert scale survey questions. According to Barnett (1991), the structured format required the respondent to respond within permitted categories. A quantitative survey for this applied research was deemed to be appropriate and was designed using radio button responses, thus allowing participants the choice

of only one response for each of the prompts provided (Bickman & Rog, 2009). This approach helped to eliminate misinformation that may result from multiple responses. The survey was comprised of three sections. The first section of the survey gathered demographic information regarding military status, gender, age, level, and years of teaching experience, academic specialty, highest level of education, academic rank, previous, or current experience teaching leadership, and willingness to participate in the Leadership Instructor Interview. The next section of the survey sought to provide an understanding of how instructors perceived their understanding of the course, department, and organizationally defined areas associated with classroom teaching practices, outcomes, and more. The concluding section of the survey sought to gain an understanding of how the course, department, and organizationally defined areas are associated with the current course curriculum being delivered across the department. These two areas of the survey were designed using a seven-point Likert Scale, which included a 1-7 scale: 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Slightly Disagree*, 4 = *Neither (Agree nor Disagree)*, 5 = *Slightly Agree*, 6 = *Agree*, and 7 = *Strongly Agree*. According to Sullivan and Artino (2013), the Likert scale was developed by Rensis Likert as a way to measure attitudes, and it is typically used as a 5-point or 7-point ordinal scale to measure respondent's agreement or disagreement level with a specific statement or list of statements. As previously discussed, the surveys were sent to all personnel who were teaching or had recently taught a DFBL course. The expected completion rate of this survey was approximately 50%, with an expected 20 personnel completing the survey. Each of these instructors had access to departmental resources and training and was held to the same standards for the classroom. The survey was available online and was built and distributed via Microsoft Forms to allow access via a web browser or mobile device. Alternatively, printed versions of the survey were available for instructors to pick up

from the department secretary or the researcher to allow the respondents to complete the survey when it was convenient for them (Bickman & Rog, 2009). The survey template can be viewed at <https://shorturl.at/wEKTW> and was projected to take nine minutes to complete. Research by Revilla and Ochoa (2017) found that ten minutes (or less) was the optimal length for web-surveys and twenty minutes was considered to be a maximum length. Allowing the participants to access the survey through either the Microsoft Forms link or a printed version allowed for completion outside of the normal duty day and allowed the participants additional time and autonomy to complete it. Participants had one week to complete the survey from when it was distributed. At the four-day mark a survey reminder email was sent, and a message was posted on the Teams channel for all personnel. A one-week extension was to be granted if, at the one-week deadline, there were fewer than 15 responses; however, this was not deemed necessary by the researcher.

The use of the Likert scale to survey personal reflection data, through the use of responses ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree* provided ordered responses or ordinal data. When the responses for surveys are ordinal, Daykin and Moffatt (2002) suggested the ordered probit model for analysis, stating specifically, “The ordered probit model serves as an appropriate framework for statistical analysis whenever survey responses are ordinal” (p. 157). The survey data were analyzed using the ordered probit model. The response data were captured on a table to provide side-by-side comparisons of the respondents’ answers across a variety of factors.

Demographic Questions

Instructions: Choose the best response for each below prompt.

1. Which category best describes you?

- ☐ Military – Colonel
- ☐ Military – Lieutenant Colonel
- ☐ Military – Major
- ☐ Military – Captain
- ☐ Military – Other
- ☐ Civilian – Prior Military
- ☐ Civilian – No Prior Military Service
- ☐ Civilian – Other

2. Which category best describes your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

3. Which category best describes your age?

- ☐ 20-29 years
- ☐ 30-39 years
- ☐ 40-49 years
- ☐ 50-59 years
- ☐ 59+ years
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. Identify the years of teaching experience you currently have at each academic level.

_____ K-12 Education

_____ 2-year College

- _____ 4-year College
- _____ Graduate College
- _____ Military Training
- _____ Total Years

5. Which category best describes your academic specialty? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Clinical Psychology
- ☐ Education / Leadership
- ☐ Psychology / Counseling
- ☐ Sociology / Social Work
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

6. Which category best describes your level of education?

- ☐ Master's Degree (MA / MBA / MS / MSW)
- ☐ ABD – Doctorate
- ☐ Doctorate (EdD / PhD / PsyD)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

7. Which category best describes your academic rank?

- ☐ Guest Instructor
- ☐ Instructor / Senior Instructor
- ☐ Assistant Professor
- ☐ Associate Professor
- ☐ Full Professor
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

8. Which core leadership courses have you taught within DFBL? (select all that apply)

- ☐ None
- ☐ Beh Sci 310
- ☐ 2018-2019 | Leadership 100/200/300
- ☐ 2019-2020 | Leadership 100/200/300
- ☐ 2020-2021 | Leadership 100
- ☐ 2020-2021 | Leadership 200
- ☐ 2020-2021 | Leadership 300
- ☐ 2021-2022 | Leadership 100
- ☐ 2021-2022 | Leadership 200
- ☐ 2021-2022 | Leadership 300
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

9. If you taught core leadership course(s) prior to 2021, would you be interested in completing the Leadership Instructor Interview about your experience teaching the past leadership curriculum?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Survey Questions

Personal Understanding

Instructions: Identify your degree of agreement or disagreement for each of the below prompts:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Neutral, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

1. I fully understand the course level *learning objectives* for the course(s) I teach.

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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This question looked to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the learning objectives within the course they teach. As previously stated, internal alignment, as defined by Shaltry (2020), needs to consider the following three elements: "teaching and learning activities, assessments, and objectives" (p. 658). Therefore, alignment of these three elements must be measured across the course, department, and organizational levels.

2. I fully understand the course level *teaching and learning activities* for the course(s) I teach.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Just as question one looked to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the learning objectives within the course they teach, this question looked at teaching and learning activities, as identified by Shaltry (2020). Again, internal alignment, as defined by Shaltry (2020), needs to consider the following three elements: "teaching and learning activities, assessments, and objectives" (p. 658). Therefore, alignment of these three elements must be measured across the course, department, and organizational levels.

3. I fully understand the course level *assessments* for the course(s) I teach.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

To continue the understanding regarding Shaltry's (2020) elements of internal alignment, this question focused on the instructors understanding of assessments within their course.

4. I fully understand the course level *reading material* for the course(s) I teach.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

In order to support the three identified elements of course alignment, objectives, assessment, and teaching and learning activities (Shaltry, 2020), the reading materials must be understood by the instructor in order to enhance alignment. This question allowed for an instructor interpretation of their level of understanding with the reading materials. Elicitation of teacher feedback regarding instructional materials was identified as one of the key activities school leaders utilized in the process of assessing the quality of the material (Wang et al., 2021).

5. I fully understand the *DFBL Mission Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question and the following three questions sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the department's academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes.

6. I fully understand the *DFBL Vision Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As discussed above, Questions 5-8 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the department's academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes.

7. I fully understand the *DFBL Objectives (Goals)*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As discussed above, Questions 5-8 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the department's academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two

principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes.

8. I fully understand the *DFBL Expected Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As discussed above, Questions 5-8 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the department's academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes. Additionally, as discussed regarding the interview questions, Tyler's Rationale (1949) posited questioning how educational experiences could be organized in an effective manner. The DFBL Learning Outcomes identify the expected learning outcomes and what the student should be able to do based on the established learning expectation. Therefore, it is essential to consider the external alignment of the course(s) to ensure both internal and external alignment is being accomplished and organized under the behavioral sciences approach to leadership.

9. I fully understand the *USAFA Mission Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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As discussed above, Questions 5-8 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the department academic expectations, but this question along with Questions 10-15 sought to understand this on an organizational level. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes.

10. I fully understand the *USAFA Vision Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As discussed above, Questions 9-15 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the organizational academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two

principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes.

11. I fully understand the *Leaders of Character Framework*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As discussed above, Questions 9-15 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the organizational academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes. As previously mentioned regarding the interview questions, the definition of leaders of character, as identified in the framework, need to be understood both for internal alignment and external alignment within the curriculum. Additionally, instructors need to understand and align their definition of a leader of character with the institutional expectation. Shaltry (2020) stated:

The effects of misalignment often manifest in three ways: within a course, between courses/programs, and beyond the school in which a course resides ... this could result in a disadvantage for students when attempting to learn new concepts and skills. (p. 659)

12. I fully understand the *PITO Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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As discussed above, Questions 9-15 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the organizational academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes. The organization has established outcomes toward the institutional goal of developing leaders of character through an integrated developmental experience. The proficiencies associated with leadership development using the PITO model of developing personal, interpersonal, team and organizational leadership (Outcomes, 2021).

13. I fully understand the *Leadership Growth Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As discussed above, Questions 9-15 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the organizational academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of

core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization,” while principle two states, “Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture’s core values” (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes. The organization has established outcomes toward the institutional goal of developing leaders of character through an integrated developmental experience.

14. I fully understand the *USAFA Guiding Principles*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

As discussed above, Questions 9-15 sought to identify the instructor’s perceived understanding of the organizational academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, “A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization,” while principle two states, “Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture’s core values” (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes. The organization has established outcomes toward the institutional goal of developing leaders of character through an integrated developmental experience.

15. I fully understand the *USAFA Institutional Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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As discussed above, Questions 9-15 sought to identify the instructor's perceived understanding of the organizational academic expectations. According to Character.org (2021), an organization that advocates for character development and growth, there are 11 identified principles for creating and sustaining a culture of character. The first principle states, "A set of core values are identified and embedded into the culture of the family, school, sports team, or organization," while principle two states, "Character involves understanding, caring about and practicing your culture's core values" (Character.org, 2021, 11 Principles section). These two principles highlight the significance of establishing a mission and vision statement, as well as setting objectives and expected learning outcomes. The organization has established outcomes toward the institutional goal of developing leaders of character through an integrated developmental experience.

16. I am interested in teaching Leadership 100, 200, and/or 300.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Due to the unique history and churn in the leadership core courses, Question 16 was included to identify instructors who have a desire to teach the leadership curriculum and would have the potential to contribute to the alignment efforts. In fact, the Character.org's (2021) eighth principle states, "All staff share the responsibility for developing, implementing, and modeling character," and principle nine states, "The school's character initiative has shared leadership and long-rang support for continuous improvement" (11 Principles section). The principles

emphasize the fact that all academic personnel are expected to play an active role in achieving the organizational mission of developing leaders of character and this research question seeks to see who is willing and able to meet this challenge.

Assess Course Alignment

This section seeks to identify the instructor's assessment of course alignment at the department and organizational levels. Your responses will be used to establish a benchmark and inform department recommendations for future course design.

Select and identify your course of instruction for the course being assessed. This should be a course you are currently or have recently instructed.

Course being assessed: _____

Which of the below best describes your role in the course identified above?

- ☐ Instructor
- ☐ Assistant Course Director
- ☐ Course Director

Instructions: Identify your degree of agreement or disagreement for each of the below prompts:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Neutral, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

All questions in this section were repeated from the previous survey section but asked the instructor to consider how their course aligned with these specific departmental and organizational areas. Kulasegaram et al. (2018) pointed out that despite curriculum change efforts, the outcomes are frequently the same, due in part to necessary changes for purpose and process being neglected while curriculum delivery or formatting are all that are adjusted. Failure to fully examine the curriculum processes or purpose before moving forward with changes will likely lead to recurrent or continued misalignment with the societal need for leaders of character

in military leadership positions (Kulasegaram et al., 2018). Therefore, each of the following 11 questions addressed the instructor's assessment of internal and external alignment across the department and organization. Having an understanding of course alignment from the instructors who teach both behavioral sciences courses, in addition to the leadership core courses, provided a more informed analysis of alignment and sought to inform improved recommendations for curriculum alignment within the core leadership courses.

1. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Mission* – Nurture and empower cadets and faculty to grow professionally and personally in a culture of care, respect, and scientific thinking.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Vision* – The Air and Space Force's premier organization for the teaching, advancement, and application of Behavioral Sciences.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Objectives (Goals)*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 1: Deliver world-class education experiences using scientific thinking in psychology and sociology as our foundation.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 2: Cultivate a community of leaders dedicated to the application, advancement, and clear communication of our disciplinary knowledge.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 3: Use empirically driven content and analysis to develop inclusive leaders who respect the human dignity of all people.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 1: Develop scientific thinking using psychology and sociology as a foundation to be able to advance knowledge in the field.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 2: Apply scholarship within the field to contemporary issues, to include Air Force, Space Force, and Joint Operation.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 3: Communicate knowledge of psychology and sociology.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 4: Serve as an inclusive leader who respects the dignity of all people.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. This course demonstrates alignment with the *USAFA Mission Statement* – To educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force and Space Force in service to our Nation.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. This course demonstrates alignment with the *USAFA Vision Statement* – To serve as the Air and Space Forces’ premier institution for developing leaders of character.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. This course demonstrates alignment with the *Leader of Character Framework*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 1: Owning the Process: Own - pursuit of your identity | (a) your attitude & effort, (b) your duty, (c) your commitments, and (d) your role in development.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 2: Engaging in Purposeful Experiences: Engage - purposeful experiences | Individual Role (assess, challenge & support) / Organizational Role (assess, challenge & support).

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 3: Practicing Habits of Thought and Actions: Practice - habits of thought & actions | (a) awareness, (b) reasoning, (c) deciding, and (d) acting.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with A Leader of Character, someone who:
(a) Lives honorably by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Core Values, (b) Lifts people to their best possible selves, and (c) Elevates performance toward a common and noble purpose.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. This course demonstrates alignment with the *PITO Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Personal (Follower)

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

b. This course demonstrates alignment with Interpersonal (Wingman)

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

c. This course demonstrates alignment with Team (Tactical)

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

d. This course demonstrates alignment with Organization.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. This course demonstrates alignment with the *Leadership Growth Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

a. This course demonstrates alignment with Expectations and Inspiration - the leader critically appraises the situation, his or her own skills, and the skills of the follower; the leader then sets developmental expectations with the follower. The leader also provides inspiration to the follower by developing a shared understanding of purpose.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Instruction - to help the follower meet the leader's, follower's, and organization's expectations and objectives.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Feedback - as the follower works toward these objectives, the leader coaches and mentors the follower, assesses the follower's competency and provides feedback throughout their engagement.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Reflection - (where the leader and follower review their expectations, instructions, and feedback) crystallizes any lessons learned and prepares participants to enter the next cycle.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. This course demonstrates alignment with the *Guiding Principles*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 1: Align the USAFA experience with accepted USAF practices.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 2: Emphasize cadet ownership and accountability for their own development.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 3: Ensure all leaders and followers gain from each developmental experience, including both successes and failures.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 4: Establish a common core of experiences and multiple paths to similar outcomes.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- e. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 5: Strike an appropriate balance between quality and quantity of development experiences.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- f. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 6: Create depth of expertise sequentially and progressively based on a cadet's developmental level using the PITO model.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- g. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 7: Couple adequate support with every challenge; tailor every challenge with an appreciation that cadets develop differently and will move through the process at different speeds.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- h. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 8: Use goal-oriented and standards-based approaches to build skill-set expertise.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- i. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 9: Assess the effectiveness of education, training, and experiential processes.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. This course demonstrates alignment with the *USAFA Institutional Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Critical Thinking – to apply self-aware, informed, and reflective reasoning for problem solving and decision making in the absence of ideal information.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Clear Communication – to express ideas in writing or in a prepared, purposeful presentation with the intent to enhance knowledge, foster understanding, and stimulate new thinking by the receivers.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Application of Engineering Methods – to understand the opportunities, requirements, and constraints imposed by the scientific and mathematical workings of the universe, supported by knowledge of the current and projected state of technology.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Scientific Reasoning and the Principles of Science – to apply scientific habits of mind, including proficiency in the nature of science, scientific reasoning, and the principles of science.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- e. This course demonstrates alignment with The Human Condition, Cultures, and Societies – to comprehend what it means to be human, the individual situated in a culture and society, and the interactions of people from different socio-cultural milieus.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- f. This course demonstrates alignment with Leadership, Teamwork, and Organizational Management – to apply character-based leadership principles at the personal, interpersonal, team, and organizational levels.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- g. This course demonstrates alignment with Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity – to recognize ethical alternatives among the options available, use ethical judgment to select the best alternative, and act consistently to respect the dignity of all affected persons.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- h. This course demonstrates alignment with National Security of the American Republic – to possess the knowledge necessary to protect the fundamental values and core interests of the United States and recognize the broader political context in which military force must be employed.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- i. This course demonstrates alignment with Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens – to persevere despite physical and mental hardships, embrace the oath of office and the profession of arms, adopt the core values, and value all Airmen.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Ethical Considerations

IRB approval was secured before conducting any research and collecting any data. During the research proceedings, any changes were approved by the appropriate level via the dissertation chair, research consultation, and the IRB prior to implementation. Based on the nature of the institution, pseudonym names are utilized for the interview and survey participants. Ethically, the review of documents took into consideration possible researcher biases and consideration for the original purpose and context of the data being analyzed (Bowen, 2009; O’Leary, 2014). All documents were locked in a desk drawer in a locked office when not occupied or in use.

Additionally, all electronic files were password-protected and stored on an external hard drive that, when not in use, was stored inside a locked safe. All participants were treated with

dignity and respect. Participants were informed of their option to opt out of the study at any time and encouraged to ask for clarification of any instructions they may not completely understand. Any other ethical concerns that may arise will be handled promptly. Due to the nature of the researchers position at the academy, to reduce the chances of researcher bias and conflict of interest, any data that may potentially contain researcher bias was reviewed through outside counsel.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to improve the alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The problem was that the current core leadership curriculum has undergone significant changes over the past several years to include leadership, format, and structure, which has significantly impacted the alignment within these courses. This chapter provided an overview of the applied research proposed to improve the problem of alignment and presented the design of the study, the site of the study, permission to conduct the study, the participants who informed the study, the researcher's role, and ethical considerations. This chapter also presented the design, research questions, the site description, the participants, the interview questions and procedures, documents procedures, and survey questions and procedures. This chapter provided a thorough look at the proposed methods for this applied research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest to gain a better understanding and to provide recommendations for improvement. The problem was the current core leadership curriculum underwent significant changes over the past half-decade to include changes in leadership, delivery format, and even course structure. All of these changes affected the alignment within and across these courses. The findings of this study may provide additional insights for improved curriculum alignment for other courses within the department and at this institution. Data were collected and reviewed through three collection methods – qualitative interviews with core leadership instructors, a qualitative review of historical documents, and quantitative survey data from department instructors. For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms were assigned to all institutional and participant data. This chapter of the report will discuss the participants, the results, the sub-questions, a discussion of the study findings, and provide an overall summary.

Participants

Participants contributed to the data collection process through interviews and surveys to address two of the three sub-questions for this study. Volunteers for the interview process participated in a one-on-one structured interview, answering 11 questions. The interview questions were focused on the core leadership course they teach/taught. Interviews were conducted with seven of the core leadership instructors to find themes related to curriculum alignment within and across the three core leadership courses. To volunteer for and participate in the interview process, instructors had to be currently or recently, within the past two years,

assigned as an instructor of the core leadership courses within the DFBL. Pseudonyms were used to present the interview results.

A survey was developed to collect quantitative data to inform the question of how quantitative survey data would inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The invitation to participate in the survey was distributed via email to all personnel who have taught at least one class in the DFBL within the past two-years. From the invitation email, 23 personnel completed the survey via Microsoft Forms. A summary of participant data is provided below.

Interview

Seven instructors from the core leadership courses participated in the interview process. A brief description of these participants is provided below.

Participant One was a military officer with over 24 years of service. Prior to teaching in the department, she served as commander for the preparatory school and previously served in other various leadership roles and positions to include prior enlisted member of the Army Reserve, Air Officer Commanding (AOC), Security Forces squadron commander, and deputy group commander. As a graduate of the institution, combined with her previous assignments and experiences, she offered an unmatched and notable perspective to the study.

Participant Two was a military officer with over 18 years of service. He played a vital role in the restructuring efforts in the Information Warfare arena, is a prior graduate of the institution, and recently returned to the department for a second teaching tour. As the current deputy department head and course director for the Leadership 100 course, he was able to provide keen insight for the current course and department intentions.

Participant Three was a military officer with over 20 years of service. Although he was a

military officer, he obtained his commission through Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps after completing his initial enlisted commitment. He was serving a second tour as an instructor in the department after serving in an AOC position. His vast array of experience provided a well-informed perspective and insight to this study.

Participant Four was a military officer with over 15 years of service. She was a prior-enlisted member with experience in the training career field. Although she was in her first semester in the department, her prior service and experience allowed for an informed outsider perspective.

Participant Five was a civilian full professor with over 30 years of teaching experience at the collegiate level. Some of his notable contributions and achievements included being a fellow at the Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership at the U.S. Naval Academy and a subject matter expert to the Department of Defense regarding the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” repeal. Additionally, he taught several versions of the leadership course and was able to supply a wealth of information to this study.

Participant Six was a civilian assistant professor in the department. While she was not teaching the leadership course at the time of the interview, she previously served as the assistant course director for the Leadership 200 course. She had over three years of experience teaching the leadership courses. She had over 20 years of experience in clinical support and counseling and 5 years of experience teaching at the collegiate level. Her unique background allowed for a diverse perspective to this study.

Participant Seven was a civilian associate professor in the department. He had been working and teaching at the collegiate level in various roles for 17 years. Of these 17 years, six were spent teaching in the department. At the time of the interview, he had been serving as the

leadership core course director for the past three semesters and teaching the Air Officer Commanding AOC master's program courses for the department. His vast amount of experience teaching the various versions of the leadership course coupled with his current role, allowed for a high-level view of the leadership courses and how they should be formatted and delivered.

Survey

The third method for data collection was a quantitative survey of instructors across the department. Of the 23 participants who responded to the survey, seven were instructors or senior instructors; nine were assistant professors; three were associate professors; and four were full professors. Five participants were in the 30 to 39 age range, 11 were in the 40 to 49 age range, and the remaining seven were in the 50 to 59 age range. Ten participants annotated their gender as female, and 13 identified their gender as male. Seven participants' highest degree earned was a graduate degree, and 16 earned a doctorate. The participants included 11 civilians and 12 military. Six participants had an educational or leadership specialty; 13 had a specialty in psychology; four had a specialty in sociology; and five indicated other specialties. Five participants annotated two or more specialty areas.

Results

The central question for this study was, "How can curriculum alignment be improved in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?" To address this question, three sub-questions were used to guide the data collection and review processes. The first sub-question sought to use interview data to inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses. To address this question, structured interviews were conducted with instructors from the core leadership courses to identify themes relative to their experiences teaching these courses and where improvements may be needed. Clear themes developed from

qualitative analysis. Second, a review of historical documents was conducted to address the second sub-question, which focused on how a review of documents would inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses. A qualitative review and analysis provided confirmation of historical changes and information regarding current standing. Finally, a quantitative survey was utilized to measure personal understanding of course, department, and institutional level expectations and perceived alignment in department courses. The data from the surveys was used to confirm the themes and inform recommendations for improved alignment.

Sub-question 1

The first sub-question for this study was, “How would instructors in an interview address the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?” The first method used in this study was interviews with instructors of the core leadership courses. The request for an interview was sent via email. The email included the consent to participate, a brief explanation and the purpose of this project, the qualifications for participants, and instructions on how to schedule an interview. Participants were given two weeks to schedule the interview. All interviews were scheduled within the two-week time limit provided in the initial email, and all participants completed the interviews as scheduled.

Interview Results

Structured interviews, consisting of 11 questions, were conducted in a one-on-one setting with core leadership instructors. The purpose of these interviews was to focus on recommendations for curriculum alignment in core leadership courses from the individuals who have the most recent interaction with the curriculum currently being taught or most recently taught. Interviews were conducted within the department, either in a classroom or in an office. A total of seven participants took part in the interview process. For instructors to participate in the

interview collection process, they had to be currently or recently, within the past two years, assigned as an instructor of the core leadership courses within the DFBL. Before starting each interview, the participants were provided with an overview of the study's purpose in addition to the information they received when invited to participate in the study, and the consent form was reviewed and signed. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was recorded and transcribed for analysis. The interviews were transcribed, and a qualitative analysis was conducted. During this analysis, the following codes were identified: leadership, assess/assessing/assessment, objective(s), learn(ed)/learning, improve, align/alignment, team(s)/teamwork, leads/leading/leader, develop/developing/development, organization, framework, outcome(s), personal, process(es), goal(s), theory, and interpersonal. The frequencies are identified in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency of Codes from Interview

Codes	Frequency
Leadership	40
Assess/assessing/assessment	24
Objective(s)	21
Learn(ed)/learning	14
Improve	13
Align/alignment	12
Team(s)/teamwork	9
Leads/leading/leaders	8
Develop/developing/development	7
Organization	6
Framework	5
Outcomes	5
Personal	5
Process/processes	5
Goal(s)	4

Codes	Frequency
Theory	4
Interpersonal	3

The identified codes were then grouped into themes based on how they were used in the interview. The themes that appeared consistently throughout the interview process were course material, objectives, and assessment. The themes from the qualitative data are identified and reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency of Codes grouped into Themes

Codes	Frequency	Themes		
		Course Material	Objectives	Assessment
Leadership	40	40		
Assess/assessing/assessment	24			24
Objective(s)	21		21	
Learn(ed)/learning	14	3	2	9
Improve	13	5	4	4
Align/alignment	12		11	1
Team(s)/teamwork	9	9		
Leads/leading/leaders	8	8		
Develop/developing/development	7	7		
Organization	6	6		
Framework	5		5	
Outcomes	5		5	
Personal	5	5		
Process/processes	5	5		
Goal(s)	4	4		
Theory	4	4		
Interpersonal	3	3		
		99	48	38

Based on the interview analysis and coding, the three distinctive themes identified were course material, objectives, and assessment. Additional information will be provided in the discussion section below. Based on the data analysis, there are some existing overlaps across the three themes. However, the researcher categorized the codes based on the closest interpretation of the responses to the identified themes and only considered each use of the code for one specific theme.

Sub-question 2

Sub-question 2 for this study was, “How would a review of historical documents inform the problem of curriculum alignment in core leadership courses at a military academy in the Midwest?” The document analysis was used to address this question. Historical documents were collected and analyzed using O’Leary’s (2014) 8-step planning process:

1. Create a list of texts to explore (e.g., population, samples, respondents, participants).
2. Consider how texts will be accessed with attention to linguistic or cultural barriers.
3. Acknowledge and address biases.
4. Develop appropriate skills for research.
5. Consider strategies for ensuring credibility.
6. Know the data one is searching for.
7. Consider ethical issues (e.g., confidential documents).
8. Have a backup plan.

During the first step, a list of texts to explore was created with consideration of accessibility and the significance the text would have toward informing curriculum expectations and alignment. The texts included the Institutional Outcomes, Institutional Curriculum and Course of Instruction Handbooks, and the leadership course syllabi. In Step 2, consideration on

how texts were accessed and took into consideration barriers to include language and culture. During this step, the majority of the texts were accessed using public access with regard to civilian and military institutional knowledge. For Step 3, personal and professional biases were acknowledged and taken into consideration while accessing and reviewing the historical documents. Step 4 addressed the development and execution of the appropriate research skills. External research guides were used to ensure proper research procedures and abilities were in place. The fifth step required an assessment of the credibility of the sources being used. All products being utilized for this study were accessed or acquired from credible outlets provided through the institution. Step 6 proved to be the most challenging in that this step required sorting through the massive amount of data to hone in on and identify the pertinent information necessary for this study. To ensure consideration of ethical issues, as required in Step 7, the documents used for this section of the study relied on accessible documents that are readily available either publicly or professionally and do not contain any confidential information for the institution or the members of this institution. Finally, a backup plan was interwoven into the list development to ensure adequate resources were identified and used to ensure enough information would be analyzed and used for this section of the study. After completing O'Leary's 8-step planning process, a review of the data was completed using a qualitative document analysis.

Institutional Document Review

Document analysis was conducted on a variety of institutional and departmental-level documents. These documents included sections of Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2014, dated 15 July 2019 and USAFA Instruction 36-2015, dated 29 July 2021, the nine Institutional Outcomes, the Leaders of Character Framework, the PITO Model, the Leadership Growth Model, the Guiding Principles, and Curriculum and Course of Instruction Handbook course descriptions.

During this analysis, words and phrases were identified and highlighted. For this analysis, the previously identified codes used to develop the themes for the interview data analysis were searched and assessed based on their relationship. These codes and frequencies have been reported as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

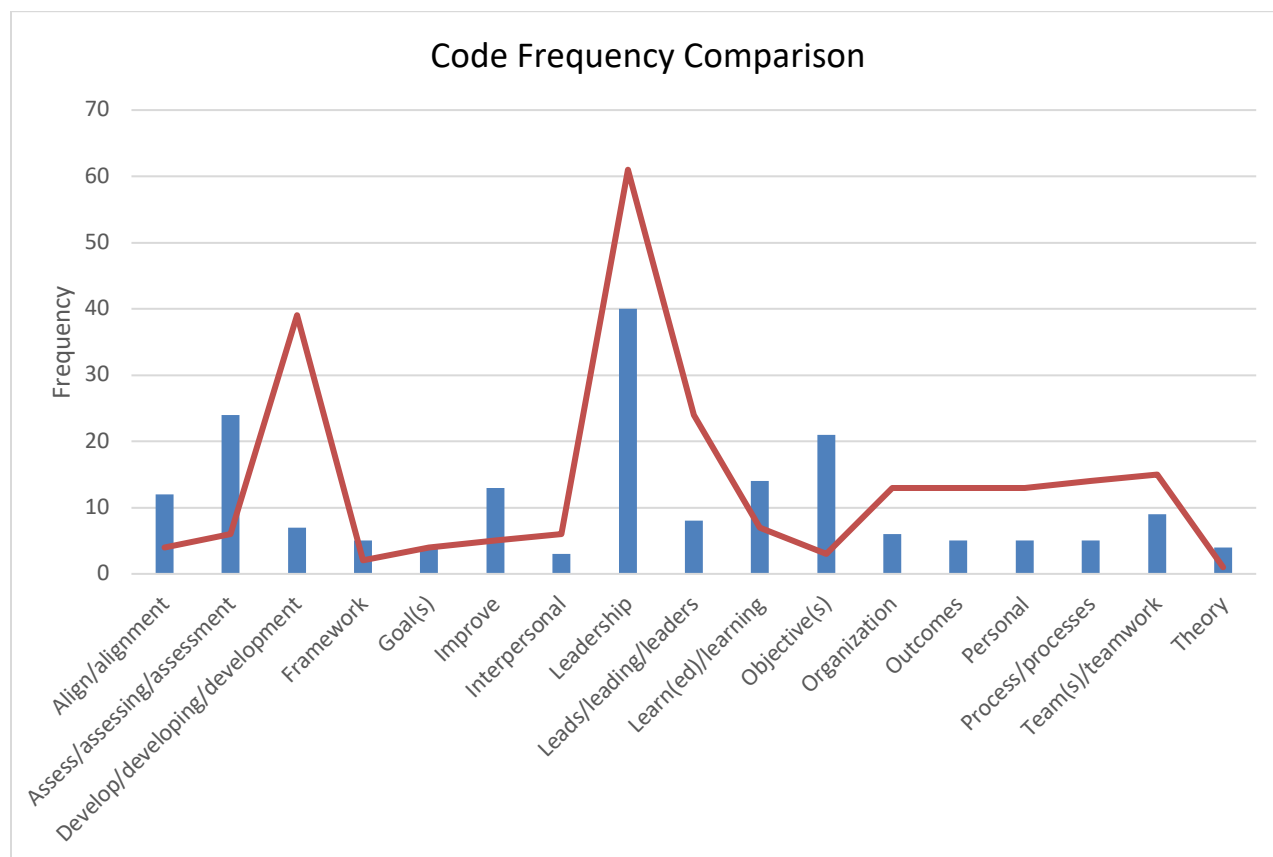
Codes and Frequencies for Document Review

Codes	Frequency
Leadership	61
Develop/developing/development	39
Leads/leading/leaders	24
Team(s)/teamwork	15
Process/processes	14
Organization	13
Outcomes	13
Personal	13
Learn(ed)/learning	7
Assess/assessing/assessment	6
Interpersonal	6
Improve	5
Align/alignment	4
Goal(s)	4
Objective(s)	3
Framework	2
Theory	1

Furthermore, the code frequency findings of the document review are represented in comparison with the code frequency findings of the interviews in Table 5 and Figure 3.

Table 5*Code Frequency Comparison*

Codes	Interviews	Documents
Align/alignment	12	4
Assess/assessing/assessment	24	6
Develop/developing/development	7	39
Framework	5	2
Goal(s)	4	4
Improve	13	5
Interpersonal	3	6
Leadership	40	61
Leads/leading/leaders	8	24
Learn(ed)/learning	14	7
Objective(s)	21	3
Organization	6	13
Outcomes	5	13
Personal	5	13
Process/processes	5	14
Team(s)/teamwork	9	15
Theory	4	1

Figure 3*Code Frequency Comparison****Syllabus Review***

A breakdown of the Leadership 100, 200, and 300 courses demonstrated some alignment and links across curriculum at each of the levels. However, this analysis demonstrated room for improvements in linking and scaffolding the course materials, objectives, and assessments.

Leadership 100. The Leadership 100 course is called Foundations for Leaders: Improving Self Awareness, and the overall course objectives are identified in the syllabus as:

Cadets will have an improved understanding of how their individual characteristics, society, and situations affect how they lead.

1. Lives Honorably. Understand how moral potency contributes to behaviors that underlie becoming a leader of character.
2. Lifts Others. Apply the sociological imagination to understand how society and culture shape our identity and influence our perceptions.
3. Elevates Performance. Understand how individual differences influence out behavioral tendencies.

These objectives are met through a focus on three identified areas: the Sociological Imagination (Structure and Culture), Personality (The Big Five and The Dark Triad), and Moral Potency. The curriculum map in Table 6 provides a more in-depth breakdown of the content and flow of this course.

Table 6

Leadership 100 Curriculum Map

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
1. Course Introduction and Overview	Course Syllabus Leaders of Character Framework	1.1 Describe course expectations for Leadership 100 1.2 Explain course structure 1.3 Understand the relationship between leadership 100 and USAFA's leader of character framework 1.4 List and describe the 3 components of a leader of character	N/A	Leader of Character Framework (L200 & L300)
2. Society and Social Structure	Scott, De Angelis, and Segal (2021) Armed Forces, War, and Society, <i>Sociology as the Study of Societies and Institutions</i> through <i>Sociology as the Study of Individuals</i> , pp. 14-22	2.1 Define and summarize key terms from the reading 2.2 Discuss how sociological factors influence our lives 2.3 Describe how social institutions are interconnected 2.4 Describe elements of social structure and their influence on individuals 2.5 Discuss how social statuses and roles shape patterns and expectations of behavior	Reading Quiz	Teams as complex systems: Organizational structure and culture (L300)

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
3. The Sociological Imagination	The Sociological Imagination Mills (1959) The Promise	3.1 Define and summarize the concept of the sociological imagination 3.2 Explain how Mills conceptualizes the relationship between history and biography 3.3 Contrast personal troubles and social issues 3.4 Given scenarios, identify personal troubles and social issues 3.5 Apply the concepts of the sociological imagination by analyzing examples 3.6 Apply the sociological imagination to understand oneself 3.7 Discuss how the sociological imagination can be used to improve leadership	Reading Quiz	Social roles and interpersonal relationships (L200) Organizational culture and structure (L300)
4. Personality	Luedtke (2007) Personality and Leadership	4.1 Define and summarize the concept of personality 4.2 Contrast type vs trait personality models 4.3 List and describe each of the 5 traits of the Big Five model of personality 4.4 Relate the influence of strong and weak situations to personality 4.5 Apply the Big 5 personality model to understand your own personality	Reading Quiz IPIP Assessment	N/A
5. Personality, Leadership, and the Dark Side	Hack and Luedtke (2020) The Dark Side, Personality, and Leadership	5.1 Distinguish dark side personality measures from “normal” personality measures 5.2 List and describe the Dark Side Personality traits 5.3 Understand the pros and cons of high/low personality traits in leadership positions 5.4 Apply personality concepts to understand the effects on your leadership	Reading Quiz SD3 Assessment	N/A
6. Moral Potency	Hannah and Avolio (2010) Moral Potency: Building the Capacity for Character-Based Leadership, <i>Conceptualizing Moral Potency</i> , pp. 293-298)	6.1 Define and summarize moral potency, moral ownership, moral efficacy, and moral courage 6.2 Compare and contrast the different moral components 6.3 Explain how self-deception and the disengagement of ownership contribute to immoral behavior 6.4 Discuss the role of moral potency in leadership.	Reading Quiz	N/A

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
7. Graded Review	Study Guide	7.1 Demonstrate personal mastery of declarative and procedural knowledge derived from course content	Graded Assessment	N/A
8. Application Activity 1	Case study #1	8.1 Given a scenario, identify personal troubles and social issues 8.2 Apply the concepts of the sociological imagination by analyzing examples 8.3 Relate the influence of strong and weak situations to personality 8.4 Apply components of moral potency to scenarios	Case Study	N/A
9. Application Activity 2	Case Study 2	9.1 Apply the concepts of the sociological imagination by analyzing examples 9.2 Relate the influence of strong and weak situations to personality 9.3 Examine personality at multiple levels of leadership 9.4 Apply personality to analyze scenarios 9.5 Apply components of moral potency to scenarios	Case Study	N/A
10. Discussion on activities	N/A	10.1 Discuss lessons learned and best practices during scenarios	Final Reflection In-class Participation	N/A

Leadership 200. The Leadership 200 course is titled Foundations for Interpersonal Leadership: Creating Influence and Managing Power, and the overall course objectives, as identified in the syllabus, are:

1. Live Honorably. Understand how our behavior in leadership roles can impact our perceptions and behaviors to better model USAF core values.
2. Lift Others. Understand how influence and power create expectations and perceptions that shape our behavior and daily interactions.

3. Elevate Performance. Understand how leaders thoughtfully develop influence and manage power to lead more effectively in accordance with the Leader of Character Framework.

These objectives are met through a focus on power and influence, status, and the Full Range Leadership Model (Transactional and Transformational). The curriculum map in Table 7 provides a more in-depth breakdown of the content and flow of this course.

Table 7

Leadership 200 Curriculum Map

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
1. Course Introduction	Syllabus	1.1 Discuss Expectations and Syllabus 1.2 Explain how the science of human behavior contributes to leadership 1.3 Discuss Leadership 100 connections	N/A	Leader of Character Framework (L100/L300)
2. Full-Range Leadership Model (Transactional)	Watola, Lindsay, & Reimer (2015). <i>Situational Obstacles to Enacting Transformational Leadership in Military Organizations</i> (pp. 121-124)	2.1 Describe the Full Range Leadership Model 2.2 Distinguish between inactive & transactional leadership forms 2.3 Identify each leadership style in the model as active/passive & effective/ineffective & be able to discuss examples of these different styles	Reading Quiz	N/A
3. Full-Range Leadership Model (Transformational)	Watola, Lindsay, & Reimer (2015). <i>Situational Obstacles to Enacting Transformational Leadership in Military Organizations</i> (pp. 125-127)	3.1 Describe the 4 I's of transformational leadership from the perspective of the leader and the follower 3.2 Explain how the 4 I's help leaders effectively apply transformational leadership 3.3 Identify factors that impede the development and use of transformational leadership	Reading Quiz	N/A

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
4. Power and Influence in Full-Range Leadership	Lovaglia, Lucas, & Baxter (2012). <i>Transactional and Transformational Leadership: Their Foundations in Power and Influence</i> (pp. 23-30)	4.1 Distinguish between power, motivation, and influence and explain how each aligns with FRLM 4.2 Explain how leaders use power effectively to develop influence 4.3 Identify reasons leaders may develop an over-reliance on power and its related effects	Reading Quiz	N/A
5. Hierarchies and the Psychological Effects of Power	Magee, Galinsky, & Wagner (2012). <i>Social Hierarchy: The Self-Reinforcing Nature of Power and Status</i> (pp. 365- 371)	5.1 Explain why/how positions of higher and lower power and status have critical effects on an individual's psychological state 5.2 Identify ways that power affects perception and how this can undermine judgment and performance for leaders and followers 5.3 Identify how the application of the 4 I's increases influence and decreases reliance on power to lead more effectively	Reading Quiz	N/A
6. Influence and Status Processes	Lucas & Baxter (2012). <i>Power, Influence, and Diversity in Organizations</i> (pp. 51-57)	6.1 Differentiate power and status 6.2 Describe how expectation states develop and how they affect perception and opportunities 6.3 Distinguish between achieved and ascribed statuses and between specific and diffuse status characteristics 6.4 Explain how expectation states can impact perception and strategies for overcoming these effects for leaders and followers	Reading Quiz	N/A
7. Power, Influence, and Diversity in Leadership	Lucas & Baxter (2012). <i>Power, Influence, and Diversity in Organizations</i> (pp. 57-66)	7.1 Explain how identity intersects with leadership behaviors (how does poor leadership recreate itself?) 7.2 Identify ways power can be used to maintain or gain influence and how influence can increase power 7.3 Explain strategies for increasing group members' cohesion and commitment while leading modern teams	Reading Quiz	N/A
8. Graded Review	Review previously assigned content	8.1 Demonstrate personal mastery of declarative and procedural knowledge derived from course	Graded Assessment Note Submission	N/A

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
9. Case Study Analysis	Maeir, <i>Ten Years After - A Major Malfunction: Reflections on "The Challenger Syndrome,"</i> 2002. (pp. 282- 291)	content (Multiple Choice and 2 Short Answer) 9.1 Articulate the misapplications of power 9.2 Describe how components of the FRLM influenced the "Challenger Syndrome" 9.3 Explain how status and positions of power affected perspectives, focus, goals, and decisions of key players 9.4 Relate concepts of status and power from the "Challenger Syndrome" to the USAF/USSF	Case Study	N/A
10. Developmental Journal and the Way Forward	Journal Reflection Discussion	10.1 Discuss Challenger Case Study 10.2 Apply course concepts to leadership at USAFA and the USAF/USSF	Final Reflection	N/A

Leadership 300. The Leadership 200 course is titled Foundations for Team Leadership: Understanding Human Systems, and the overall course objectives, as identified in the syllabus, are:

Cadets will deliberately work to understand their part in creating organizational structure and culture so they can become agents of positive organizational change.

1. Lives Honorably. Understand how leadership contributes to a culture of justice and fairness in organizations.
2. Lifts Others. Use motivational interviewing techniques to inspire and develop others.
3. Elevates Performance. Understand how organizational structure and culture align with transformational leadership approaches to develop strategies to increase organizational and personal effectiveness.

These identified objectives are met through a focus on Teams, Organizational Structure and Culture, and Motivational Interviewing. The curriculum map in Table 8 provides a more comprehensive rundown of the concepts and delivery of this course.

Table 8

Leadership 300 Curriculum Map

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
1. Course introduction/Leadership 200 Review	Course syllabus	1.1 Describe course expectations for Leadership 300 1.2 Explain course structure 1.3 Understand the relationship between leadership 300 and USAFA's leader of character framework 1.4 Recall and discuss course concepts from Leadership 200 1.5 Recap the 4Is relationship to influence	N/A	Review, power, influence, FRLM (L200) Leader of Character Framework (L100/L200)
2. Teams as components of Organizational Structure (Rational vs Human Systems)	Conte & Landy, Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Organizations (pp. 536 – 543)	2.1 Define and summarize key terms from the reading 2.2 Describe classical organizational theory and its limitations 2.3 Compare and contrast Classical vs Human Relations Theories of Organizations 2.4 Relate Theory X and Theory Y and growth perspectives to perspectives on power and influence	Reading Quiz	How social structure can impact leadership styles (L100) Transactional vs Transformational Leadership (L200)
3. Team and Organizational Culture, justice, and fairness	Handel Informal Organization as Shadow Structure (pp. 145-148) Conte & Landy Justice and Fairness (pp. 436 – 442)	3.1 Explain the interaction between formal and informal systems 3.2 Describe how rules are applied in the informal structure 3.3 Compare distributive, procedural, and interactional justice 3.4 Compare norms of fairness 3.5 Explain perceptions of	Reading Quiz	What are effective strategies/behaviors that leaders can use to gain influence (4 I's)? (L200)

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
4. Identity of Team Members	Niemeyer: Identity	<p>justice and their relation to performance, commitment, motivation, retaliation, and effort</p> <p>4.1 Describe the three types of identity and how sets of the identity make up the self</p> <p>4.2 Explain the interplay between identity and behavior</p> <p>4.3 Describe how to use an understanding of identity and identity control theory to influence behavior.</p>	Reading Quiz	Idealized influence (L200) Moral Potency (L100)
5. Motivational Interviewing of Team Members	Guntner, Endrejan, and Kauffeld, Guiding Change: Using Motivational Interviewing Within Organizations (Intro thru 2.2, The MI Process)	<p>5.1 Define and Summarize Motivational Interviewing</p> <p>5.2 Discuss the role of Motivational Interviewing in organizational leadership.</p> <p>5.3 Explain how language of autonomy in creating change readiness individuals.</p>	Reading Quiz	Individualized consideration (L200)
6. Motivational Interviewing of Team Members	Guntner, Endrejan, and Kauffeld, Guiding Change: Using Motivational Interviewing Within Organizations (2.3 MI Methods to End)	<p>6.1 Define the MI method (OARS) and its relationship to the 4 Is.</p> <p>6.2 Observe and practice the use of open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries according to OARS model.</p> <p>6.3 Understand Guiding style communication and its role motivating for change.</p>	Reading Quiz	Individualized consideration (L200)
7. OARS Practicum	N/A	<p>7.1 Apply the concepts of motivational interviewing</p> <p>7.2 Apply the right reflex model of communication style</p> <p>7.3 Demonstrate an ability to enact the 4Is of transformational leadership</p>	In-class practicum Discussion Board	4I's (L200)

Lesson	Course Material	Objectives	Assessment	Links to Leadership Core
8. Decision Making for Team Leadership	Kahneman & Klein (2009). Sources of Intuiting to Conclusions Behavioral Insights Team EAST Model: Executive Summary (pp. 4-6)	8.1 Compare the natural decision making and heuristics and biases approaches to decision making 8.2 Explain the different sources of intuition and the influence of the environment on intuition 8.3 Describe the influence of the environment on the development of intuition 8.4 Explain the concepts of system 1 and system 2 and their role in decision making 8.5 Explain how to use choice architecture to help decision making	Self-Guided Quiz Course Reflection	4I's (L200)
9. Graded Review	N/A	9.1 Demonstrate personal mastery of declarative and procedural knowledge derived from course content (Multiple Choice and 2 Short Answer)	Graded Assessment Note Submission	N/A
10. Discussion	N/A	10.1 Discuss lessons learned and best practices during scenarios	Journal Reflection	N/A

Sub-question 3

The third sub-question for this study was, “How would quantitative survey data inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest?” A quantitative survey was used to collect data to address this sub-question. The survey was set up in three sections. The first section contained eight demographic questions, section two contained 15 Likert scale questions addressing the individual’s assessment of personal understanding, and the third section contained 11 higher-level statements and 37 supporting level statements that totaled 48 Likert scale statements. The scale consisted of seven possible answers ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. For quantitative analysis,

each of the responses was assigned the following numeric value *Strongly Agree* = 7, *Agree* = 6, *Slightly Agree* = 5, *Neutral* = 4, *Slightly Disagree* = 3, *Disagree* = 2, and *Strongly Disagree* = 1. The survey was emailed to faculty who taught a department course within the last two years. The email included the consent to participate, a brief explanation of the purpose of the project, the qualifications for participants, and a link to the survey. Participants were given two weeks to complete the survey. All surveys were completed within the allotted two weeks. The survey was completed by 23 participants from the DFBL to inform the problem of alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. Surveys were administered via Microsoft Forms for the purposes of data analysis.

Assessment of Personal Understanding

A frequency and mean table was created using the responses to the Likert scale survey data and included the results from the 15 Likert scale responses regarding assessment of personal understanding (see Table 9).

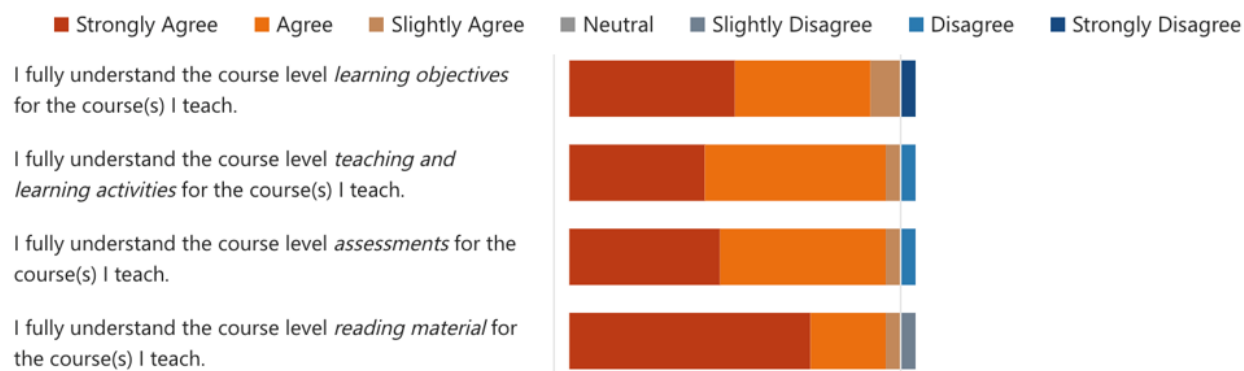
Table 9

Frequency and Average of Survey Responses – Personal Understanding

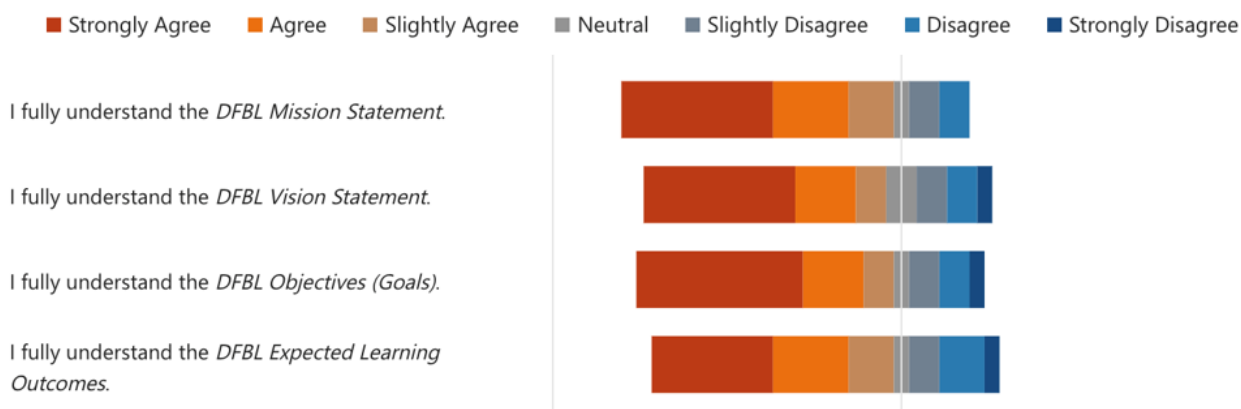
	Question	Frequency							Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
1	I fully understand the course level learning objectives for the course(s) I teach.	11	9	2	0	0	0	1	6.17
2	I fully understand the course level teaching and learning activities for the course(s) I teach.	9	12	1	0	0	1	0	6.17
3	I fully understand the course level assessments for the course(s) I teach.	10	11	1	0	0	1	0	6.22
4	I fully understand the course level reading material for the course(s) I teach.	16	5	1	0	1	0	0	6.52
5	I fully understand the DFBL Mission Statement.	10	5	3	1	2	2	0	5.61

	Question	Frequency							Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
6	I fully understand the DFBL Vision Statement.	10	4	2	2	2	2	1	5.35
7	I fully understand the DFBL Objectives (Goals).	11	4	2	1	2	2	1	5.48
8	I fully understand the DFBL Expected Learning Outcomes.	8	5	3	1	2	3	1	5.13
9	I fully understand the USAFA Mission Statement.	11	5	0	4	2	0	1	5.65
10	I fully understand the USAFA Vision Statement.	7	8	0	4	3	0	1	5.35
11	I fully understand the Leaders of Character Framework.	8	8	6	0	1	0	0	5.96
12	I fully understand the PITO Model.	6	6	5	0	0	3	3	4.87
13	I fully understand the Leadership Growth Model.	2	1	5	2	3	4	6	3.30
14	I fully understand the USAFA Guiding Principles.	5	3	5	0	3	2	5	4.17
15	I fully understand the USAFA Institutional Learning Outcomes.	9	4	5	0	3	0	2	5.35

Additionally, the groupings of responses yielded a distinct look at the personal assessment results from varied levels. The survey questions regarding instructor perception of understanding for course-specific learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, assessments, and reading material yielded the highest levels of understanding (see Figure 4).

Figure 4*Personal Assessment Results: Course Level*

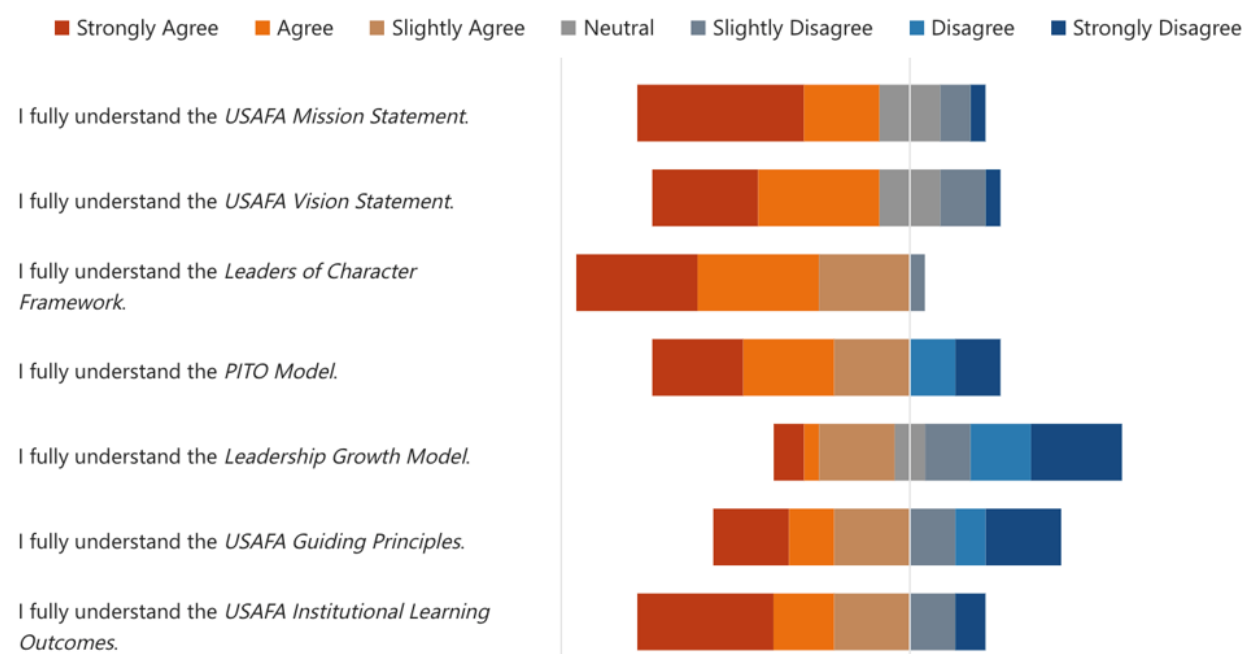
The results for the questions addressing the department-level mission statement, vision statement, objectives (goals), and expected learning outcomes demonstrated a reduced level of understanding (see Figure 5).

Figure 5*Personal Assessment Results: Department Level*

While the Institutional levels of understanding were some of the lowest scores, excluding the more publicized mission statement, vision statement, and Leaders of Character Framework. The lowest understanding assessment existed for the Leadership Growth Model and the Guiding Principles (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Personal Assessment Results: Institution Level



Assessment of Course Alignment

The statements addressed in section three of the survey focused on the participant's personal assessment of how they feel the course they teach aligns at a department or institutional level. A second frequency and mean table was created in response to the assessment of course alignment questions, which included the results from the remaining 48 Likert scale (11 higher-level and 37 supporting level) responses. The difference in mean from the raw and adjusted results ranged from -0.17 to 0.59 (see Table 10).

Table 10

Frequency and Average of Survey Responses – Course Alignment

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
1	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Mission – Nurture and empower cadets and faculty to grow professionally and personally in a culture of care, respect, and scientific thinking.	11	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	6.26
2	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Vision – The Air and Space Force's premier organization for the teaching, advancement, and application of Behavioral Sciences.	12	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	6.35
3	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Objectives (Goals).	8	10	1	1	0	0	0	3	6.25
3a	This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 1: Deliver world-class education experiences using scientific thinking in psychology and sociology as our foundation.	10	9	1	0	2	0	0	1	6.14
3b	This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 2: Cultivate a community of leaders dedicated to the application, advancement, and clear communication of our disciplinary knowledge.	7	9	6	1	0	0	0	0	5.96

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
3c	This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 3: Use empirically driven content and analysis to develop inclusive leaders who respect the human dignity of all people.	15	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	6.48
4	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Learning Outcomes.	6	5	7	1	0	0	0	4	5.84
4a	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 1: Develop scientific thinking using psychology and sociology as a foundation to be able to advance knowledge in the field.	9	5	6	2	0	1	0	0	5.78
4b	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 2: Apply scholarship within the field to contemporary issues, to include Air Force, Space Force, and Joint Operation.	9	5	6	1	1	1	0	0	5.74
4c	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 3: Communicate knowledge of psychology and sociology.	11	4	4	3	1	0	0	0	5.91
4d	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 4: Serve as an inclusive leader who respects the dignity of all people.	15	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	6.61
5	This course demonstrates alignment with the <i>USAF Mission Statement</i> – To educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force and Space Force in service to our Nation.	9	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	6.22
6	This course demonstrates alignment with the USAFA Vision Statement - To serve as the Air and Space Forces' premier institution for developing leaders of character.	6	15	1	1	0	0	0	0	6.13
7	This course demonstrates alignment with the Leader of Character Framework.	6	11	2	2	0	0	0	2	6.00

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
7a	This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 1: Owning the Process: Own - pursuit of your identity (a) your attitude & effort, (b) your duty, (c) your commitments, and (d) your role in development.	8	7	5	1	1	0	0	1	5.91
7b	This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 2: Engaging in Purposeful Experiences: Engage - purposeful experiences Individual Role (assess, challenge & support) / Organizational Role (assess, challenge & support).	8	7	5	2	1	0	0	0	5.83
7c	This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 3: Practicing Habits of Thought and Actions: Practice - habits of thought & actions (a) awareness, (b) reasoning, (c) deciding, and (d) acting.	8	7	2	3	2	0	0	1	5.73
7d	This course demonstrates alignment with A Leader of Character, someone who: (a) Lives honorably by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Core Values, (b) Lifts people to their best possible selves, and (c) Elevates performance toward a common and noble purpose.	11	8	3	0	1	0	0	0	6.22
8	This course demonstrates alignment with the PITO Model. Personal (Follower), Interpersonal (Wingman), Team (Tactical), and Organization	5	5	6	5	2	0	0	0	5.26
8a	This course demonstrates alignment with Personal (Follower)	4	6	6	4	2	0	0	1	5.27
8b	This course demonstrates alignment with Interpersonal (Wingman)	5	9	5	3	1	0	0	0	5.61
8c	This course demonstrates alignment with Team (Tactical)	4	6	6	5	1	0	1	0	5.13
8d	This course demonstrates alignment with Organization	4	8	4	4	2	0	1	0	5.17

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
9	This course demonstrates alignment with the Leadership Growth Model (LGM). Expectations and Inspiration, Instruction, Feedback, and Reflection	3	6	5	3	2	2	0	2	4.95
9a	This course demonstrates alignment with Expectations and Inspiration - the leader critically appraises the situation, his or her own skills, and the skills of the follower; the leader then sets developmental expectations with the follower. The leader also provides inspiration to the follower by developing a shared understanding of purpose.	4	6	4	6	1	1	1	0	4.96
9b	This course demonstrates alignment with Instruction - to help the follower meet the leader's, follower's, and organization's expectations and objectives.	5	8	3	2	4	1	0	0	5.22
9c	This course demonstrates alignment with Feedback - as the follower works toward these objectives, the leader coaches and mentors the follower, assesses the follower's competency and provides feedback throughout their engagement.	6	5	4	2	2	2	1	1	5.05
9d	This course demonstrates alignment with Reflection - (where the leader and follower review their expectations, instructions, and feedback) crystallizes any lessons learned and prepares participants to enter the next cycle.	6	6	3	2	2	2	1	1	5.09
10	This course demonstrates alignment with the Guiding Principles.	4	6	2	3	0	0	0	8	5.73
10a	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 1: Align the USAFA experience with accepted USAF practices.	3	9	6	4	0	0	0	1	5.50
10b	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 2: Emphasize cadet ownership and accountability for their own development.	8	10	3	1	0	0	0	1	6.14

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
10c	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 3: Ensure all leaders and followers gain from each developmental experience, including both successes and failures.	4	11	5	0	2	0	0	1	5.68
10d	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 4: Establish a common core of experiences and multiple paths to similar outcomes.	6	12	2	2	0	0	0	1	6.00
10e	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 5: Strike an appropriate balance between quality and quantity of development experiences.	2	8	9	2	1	0	0	1	5.36
10f	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 6: Create depth of expertise sequentially and progressively based on a cadet's developmental level using the PITO model.	4	9	4	3	1	1	0	1	5.41
10g	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 7: Couple adequate support with every challenge; tailor every challenge with an appreciation that cadets develop differently and will move through the process at different speeds.	5	6	7	2	1	1	0	1	5.41
10h	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 8: Use goal-oriented and standards-based approaches to build skill-set expertise.	5	8	6	3	0	0	0	1	5.68
10i	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 9: Assess the effectiveness of education, training, and experiential processes.	6	5	7	3	1	0	0	1	5.55
11	This course demonstrates alignment with the USAFA Institutional Learning Outcomes.	4	9	2	0	0	0	0	8	6.13

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
11a	This course demonstrates alignment with Critical Thinking – to apply self-aware, informed, and reflective reasoning for problem solving and decision making in the absence of ideal information.	11	7	2	1	1	0	0	1	6.18
11b	This course demonstrates alignment with Clear Communication – to express ideas in writing or in a prepared, purposeful presentation with the intent to enhance knowledge, foster understanding, and stimulate new thinking by the receivers.	6	9	6	1	0	0	0	1	5.91
11c	This course demonstrates alignment with Application of Engineering Methods – to understand the opportunities, requirements, and constraints imposed by the scientific and mathematical workings of the universe, supported by knowledge of the current and projected state of technology.	2	5	2	3	2	4	4	1	3.82
11d	This course demonstrates alignment with Scientific Reasoning and the Principles of Science – to apply scientific habits of mind, including proficiency in the nature of science, scientific reasoning, and the principles of science.	9	4	2	3	3	1	0	1	5.45
11e	This course demonstrates alignment with The Human Condition, Cultures, and Societies – to comprehend what it means to be human, the individual situated in a culture and society, and the interactions of people from different socio-cultural milieus.	14	5	3	0	0	0	0	1	6.50
11f	This course demonstrates alignment with Leadership, Teamwork, and Organizational Management – to apply character-based leadership principles at the personal, interpersonal, team, and organizational levels.	9	8	3	3	0	0	0	0	6.00

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
11g	This course demonstrates alignment with Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity – to recognize ethical alternatives among the options available, use ethical judgment to select the best alternative, and act consistently to respect the dignity of all affected persons.	14	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	6.43
11h	This course demonstrates alignment with National Security of the American Republic – to possess the knowledge necessary to protect the fundamental values and core interests of the United States and recognize the broader political context in which military force must be employed.	2	5	3	7	4	0	2	0	4.39
11i	This course demonstrates alignment with Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens – to persevere despite physical and mental hardships, embrace the oath of office and the profession of arms, adopt the core values, and value all Airmen.	3	4	8	7	0	1	0	0	5.00

Combined Results

The survey was designed to first have personnel assess their degree of understanding at the course, department, and institutional levels and then assess the alignment at each of these levels. To achieve a more accurate degree of assessment, it was essential to consider the assessed degree of understanding in conjunction with the assessed level of alignment. When assessing the department mission and the level of alignment within the identified course, it was noted that four of the 23 respondents admitted that they disagreed to some degree to fully understanding the department mission. Therefore, their level of assessment for course alignment would be unsubstantiated. Figures 7 through 10 provide visual representations of the survey responses.

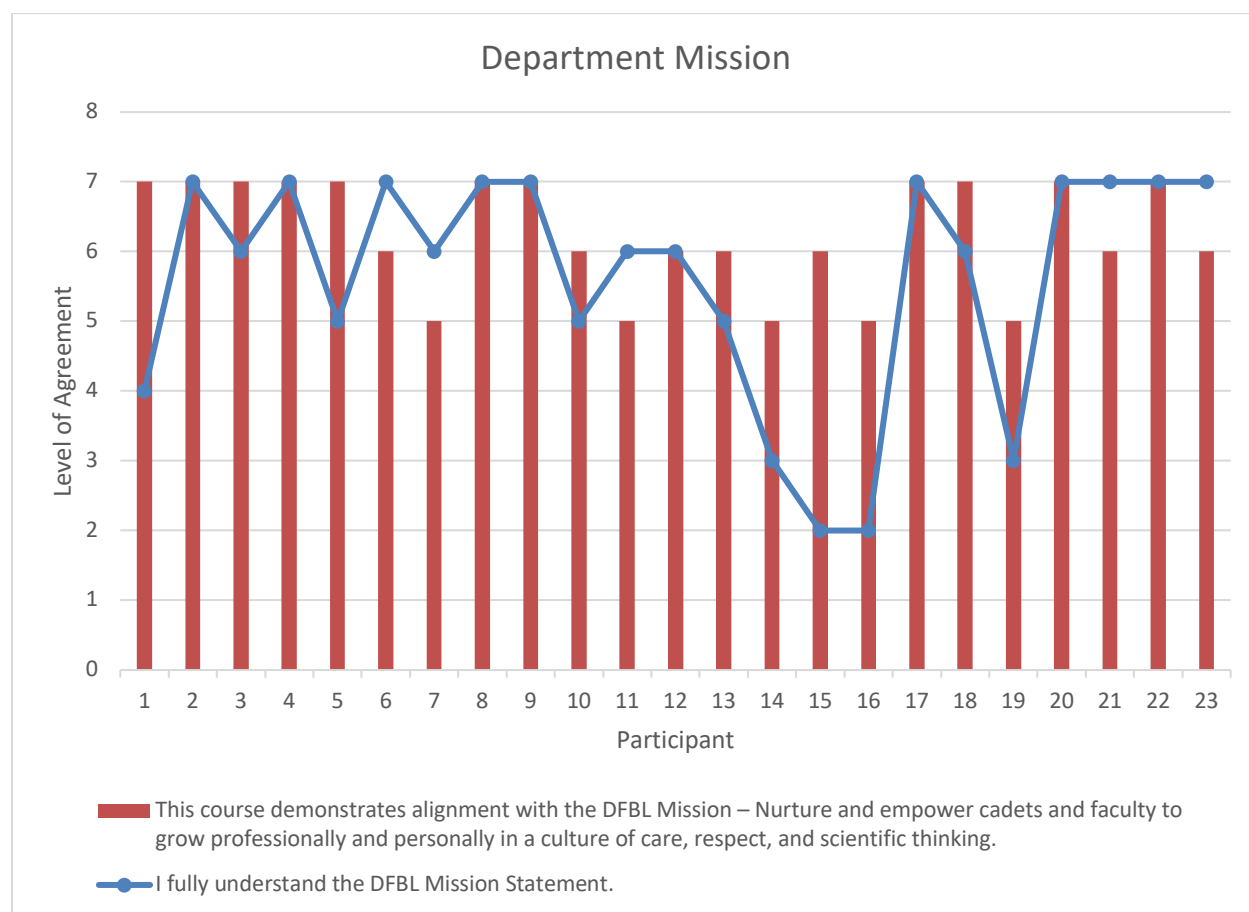
Figure 7*Combined Results: Department Mission*

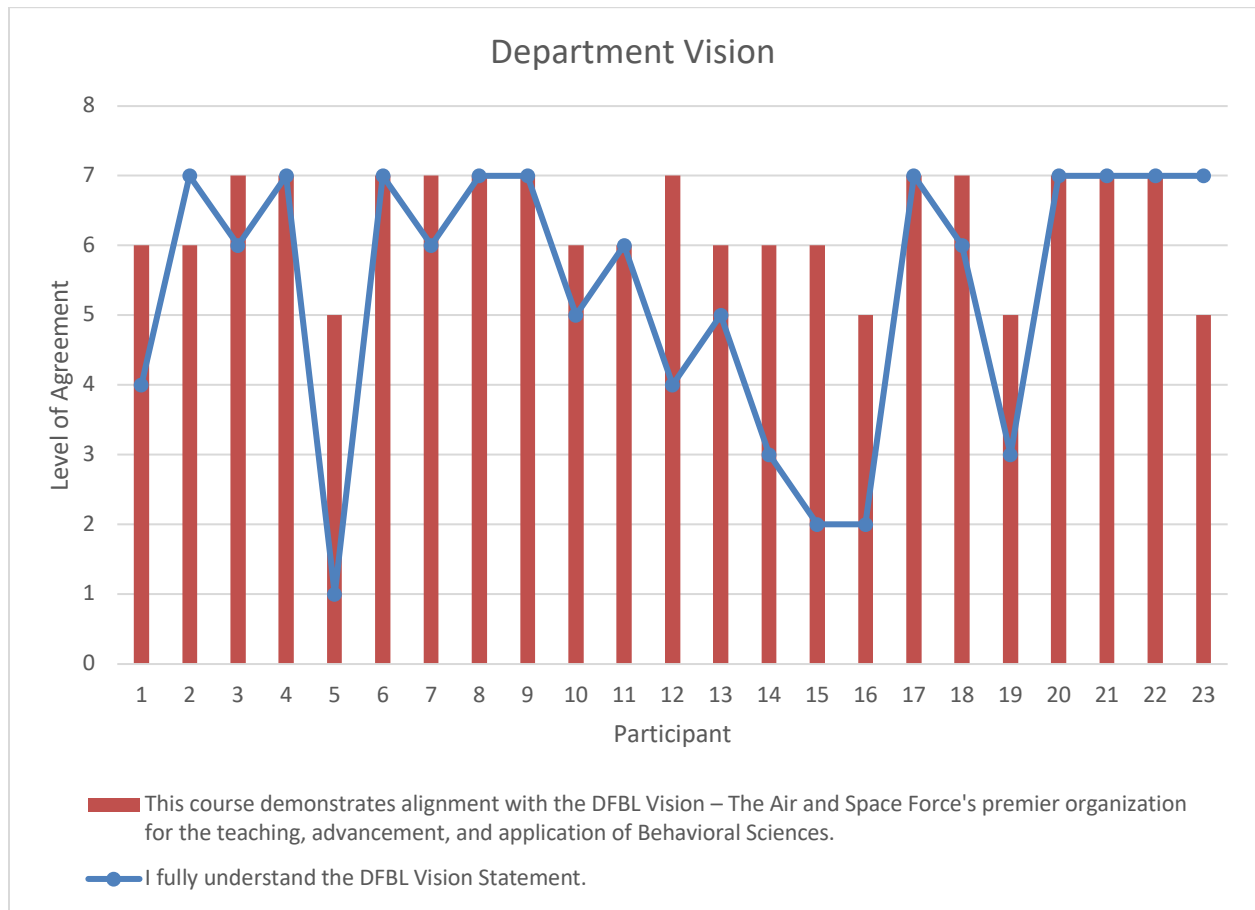
Figure 8*Combined Results: Department Vision*

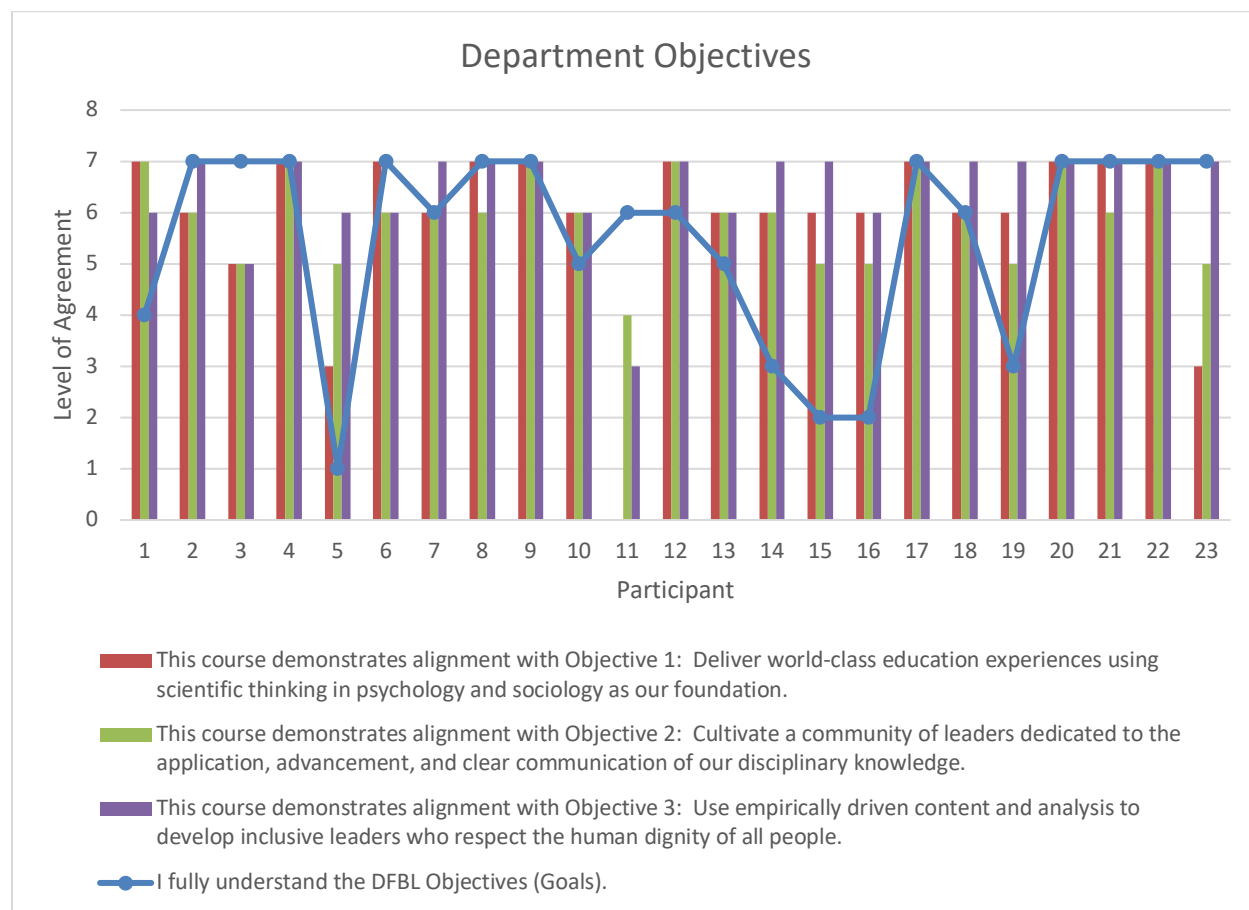
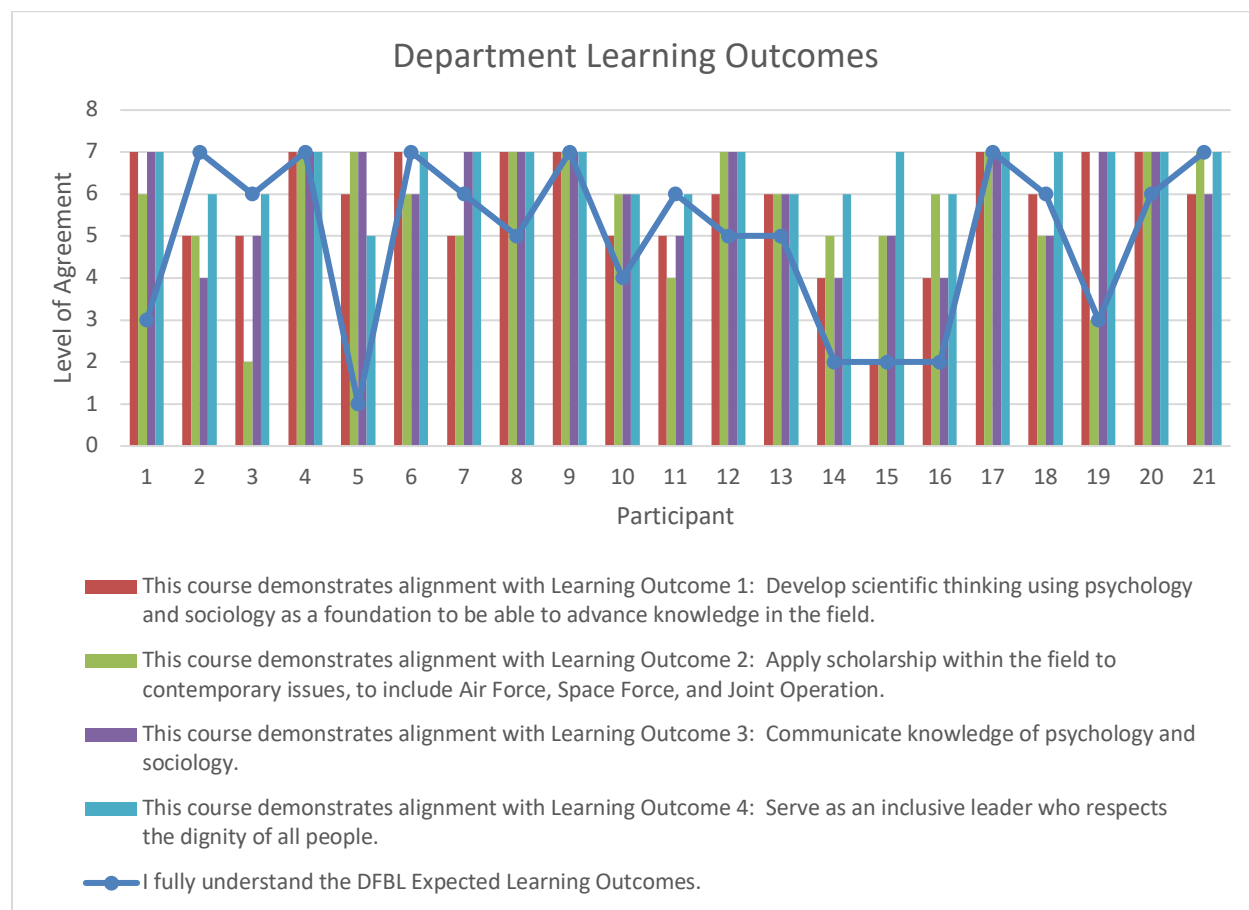
Figure 9*Combined Results: Department Level Objectives*

Figure 10*Combined Results: Department Learning Outcomes*

Institution Level. Figures 11 through 19 are visual representations of the adjusted survey results.

Figure 11

Combined Results: Institution Mission

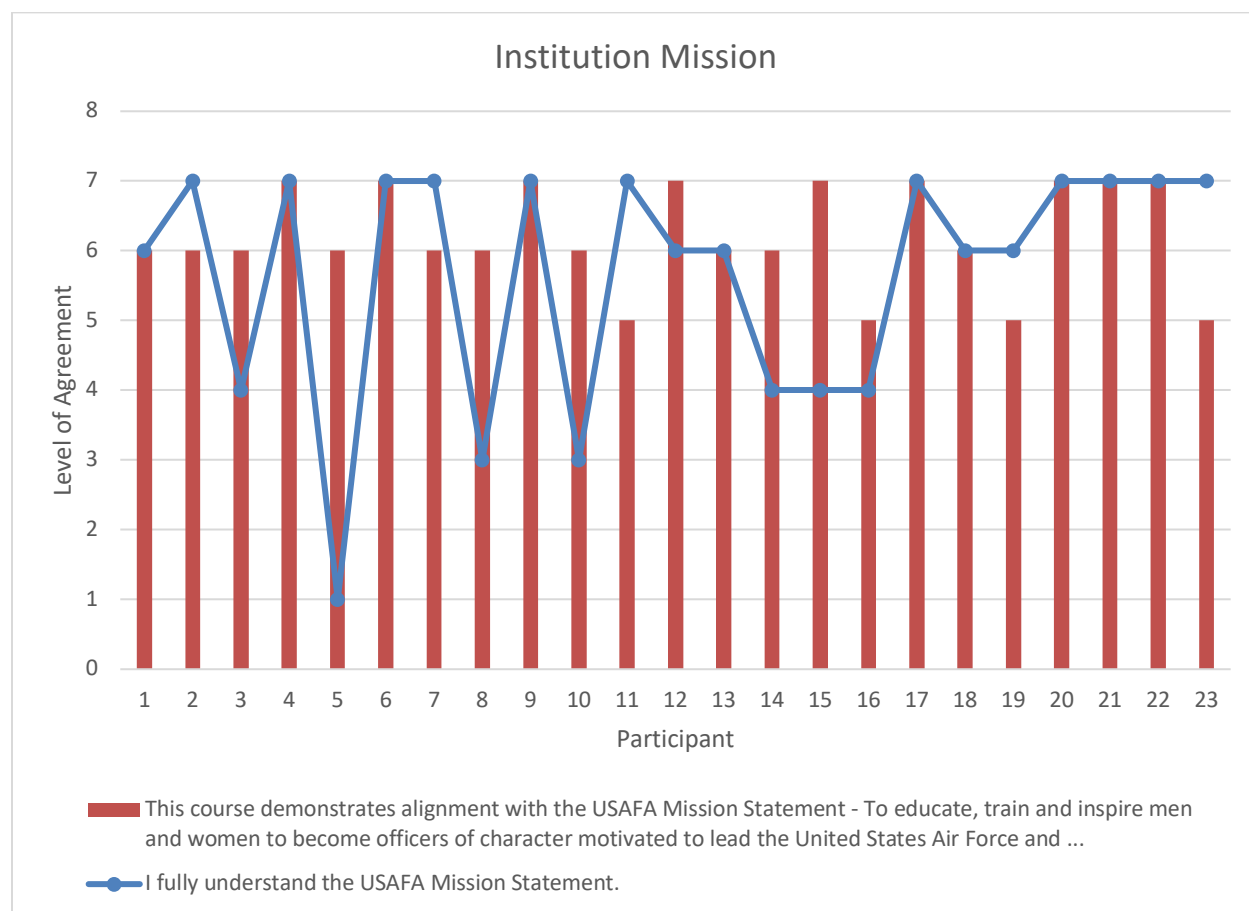


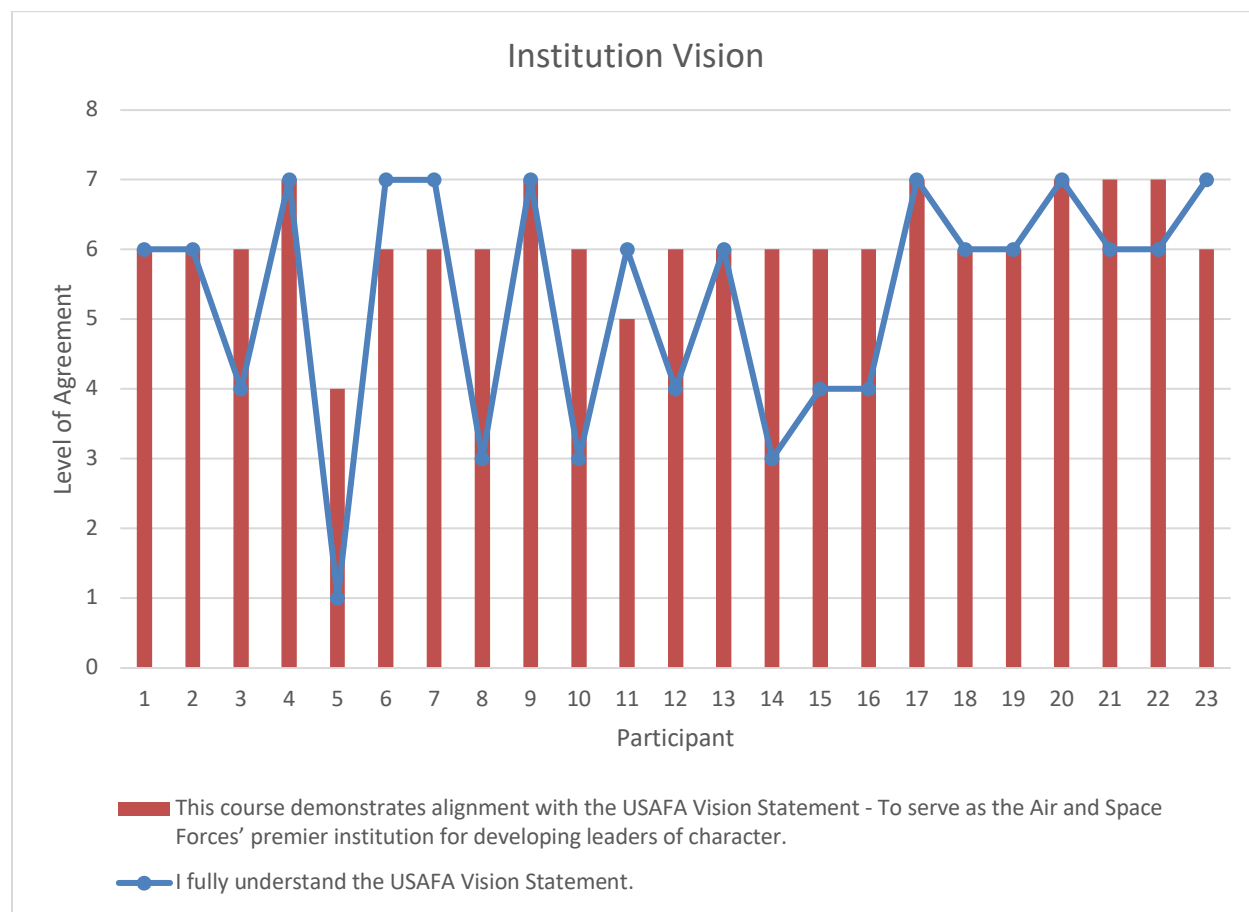
Figure 12*Combined Results: Institution Vision*

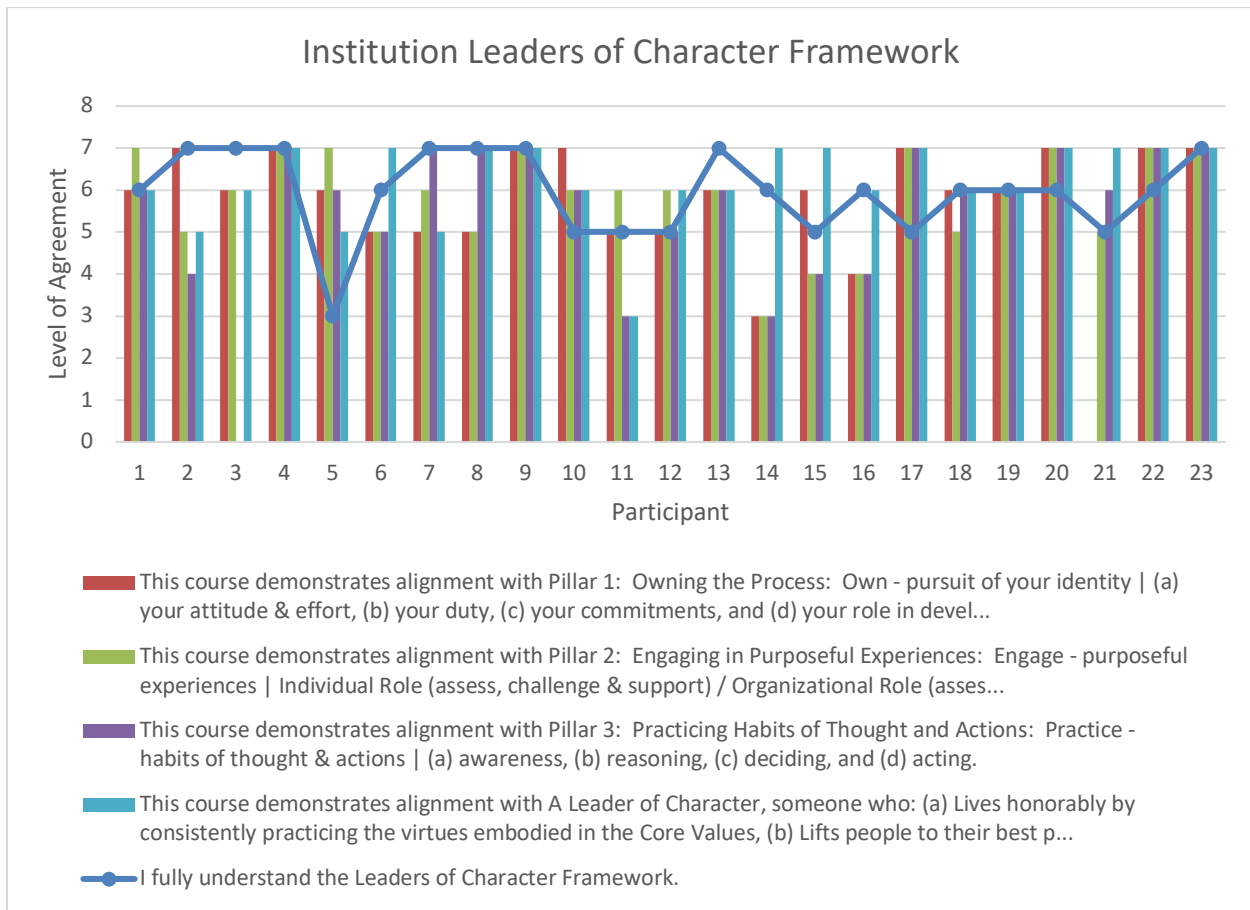
Figure 13*Combined Results: Institution Leaders of Character Framework*

Figure 14

Combined Results: Institution PITO Model

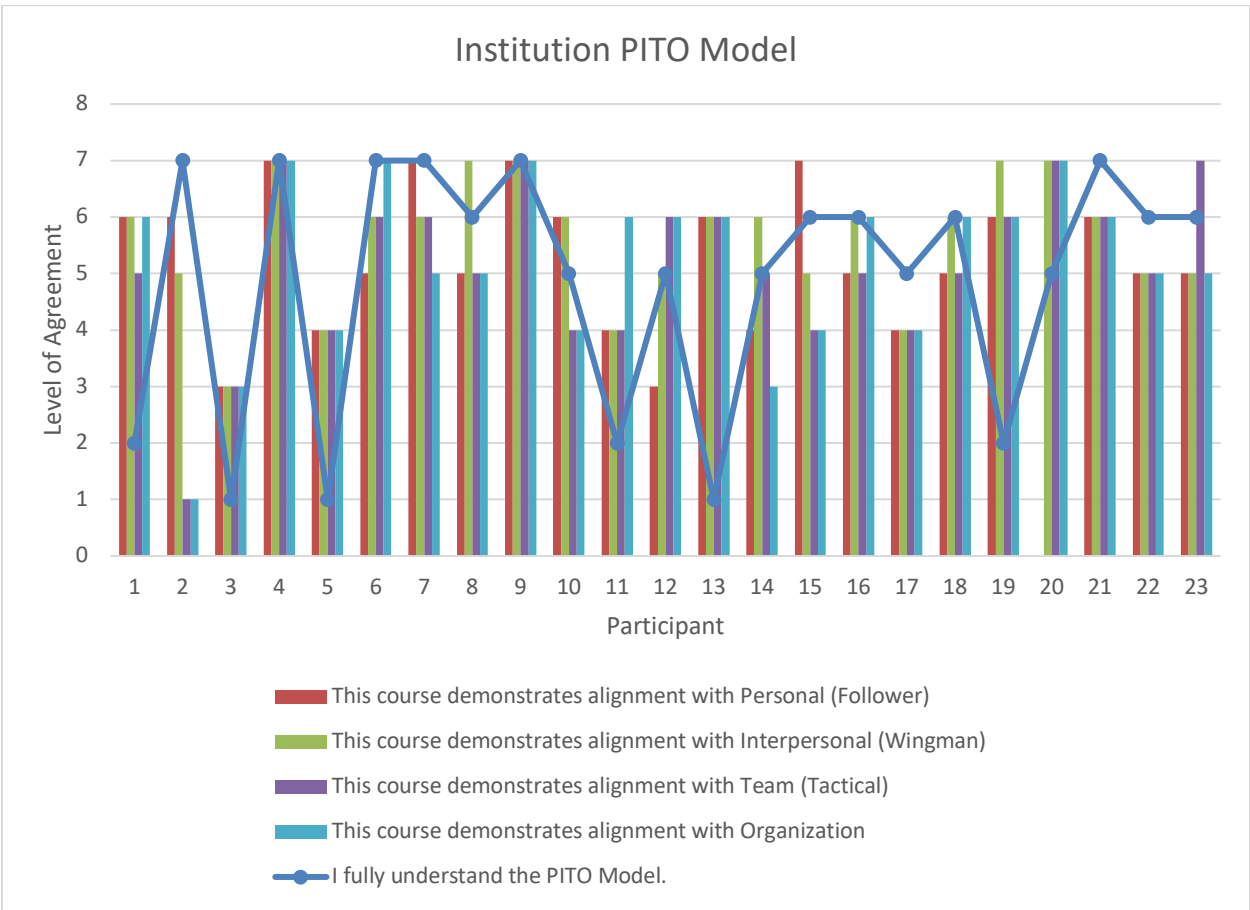
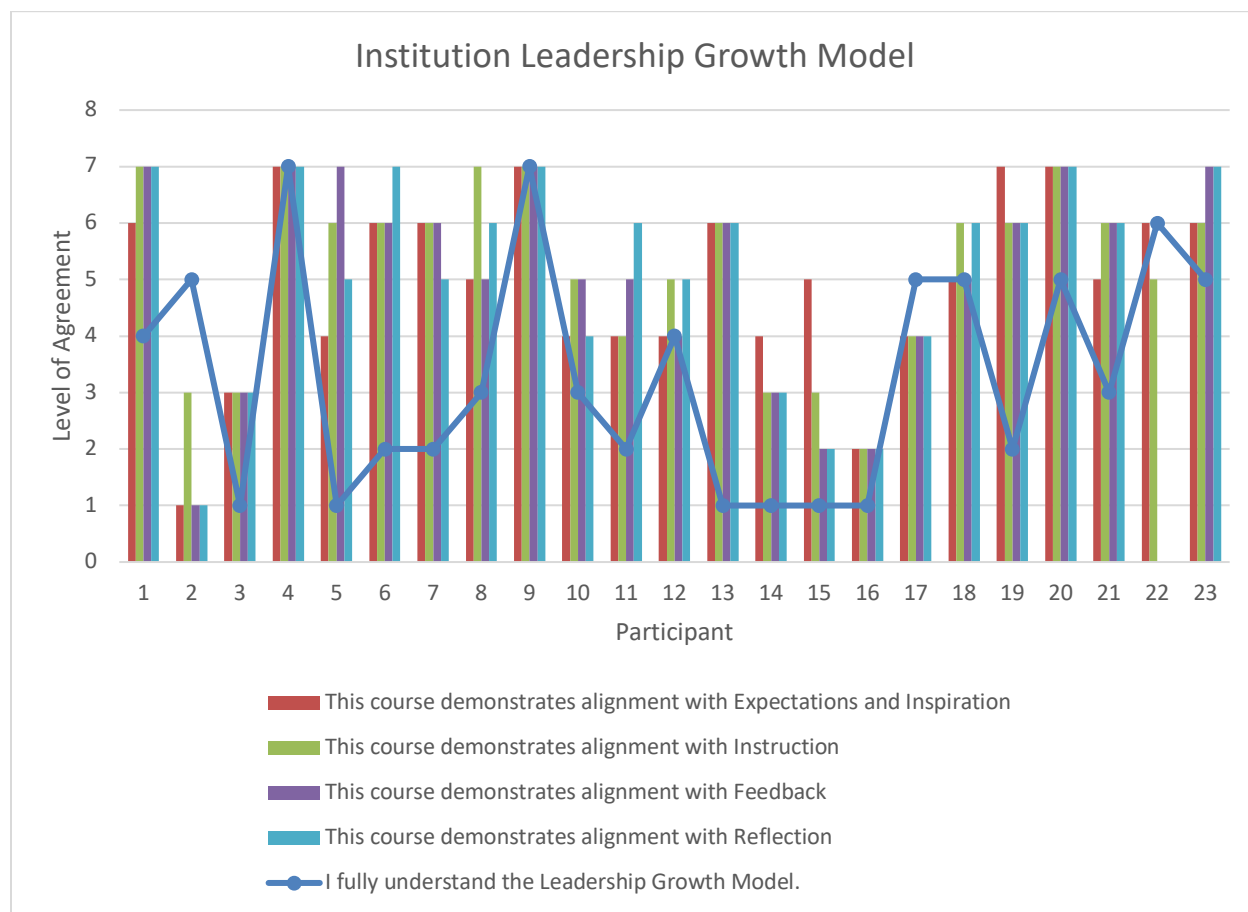


Figure 15*Combined Results: Institution Leadership Growth Model*

The combined results for the Institution Guiding Principles are divided into two graphs since there are nine Guiding Principles for readability purposes only. It was noted that 10 of the 23 participants responded that they did not fully understand the Institution Guiding Principles. These findings are of concern since these principles relate directly to course design and development.

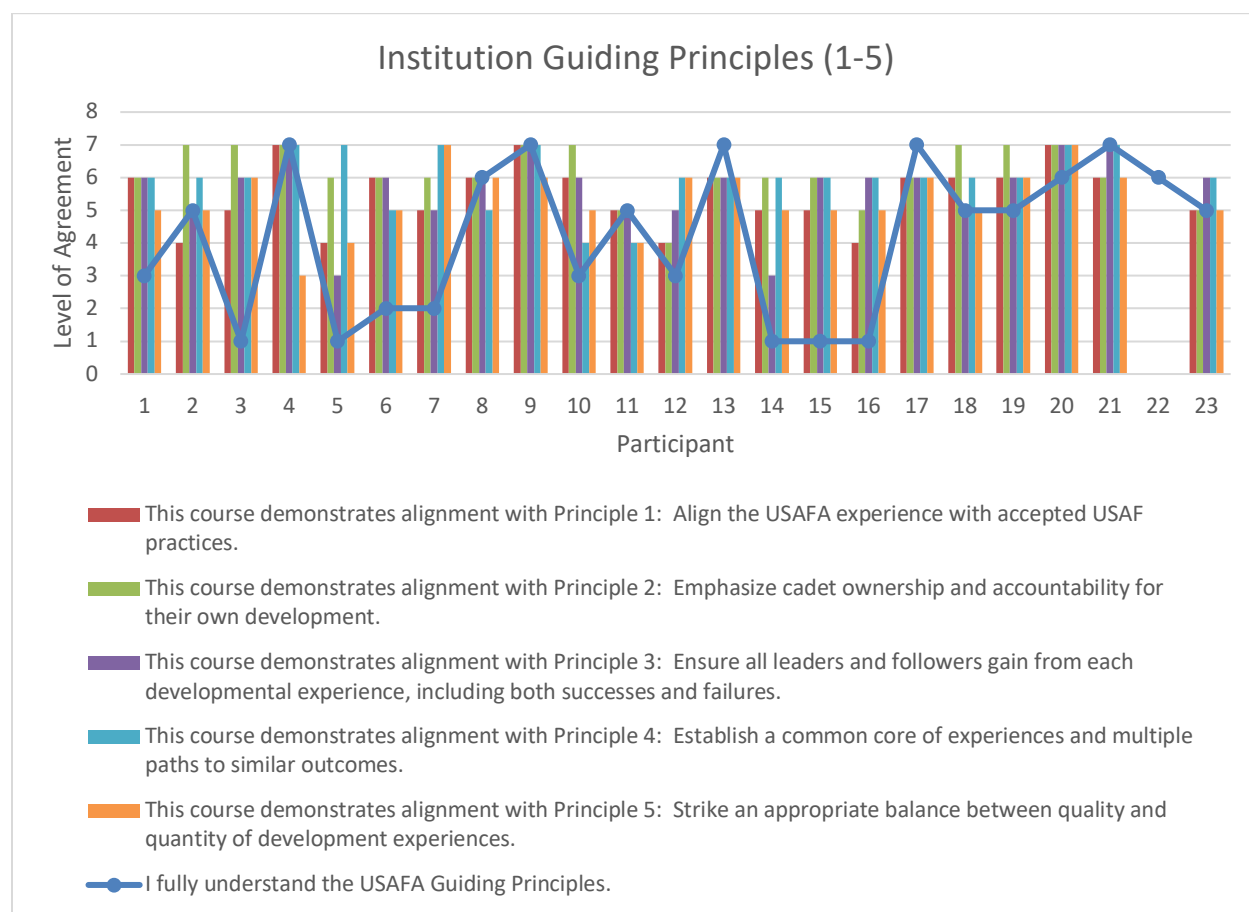
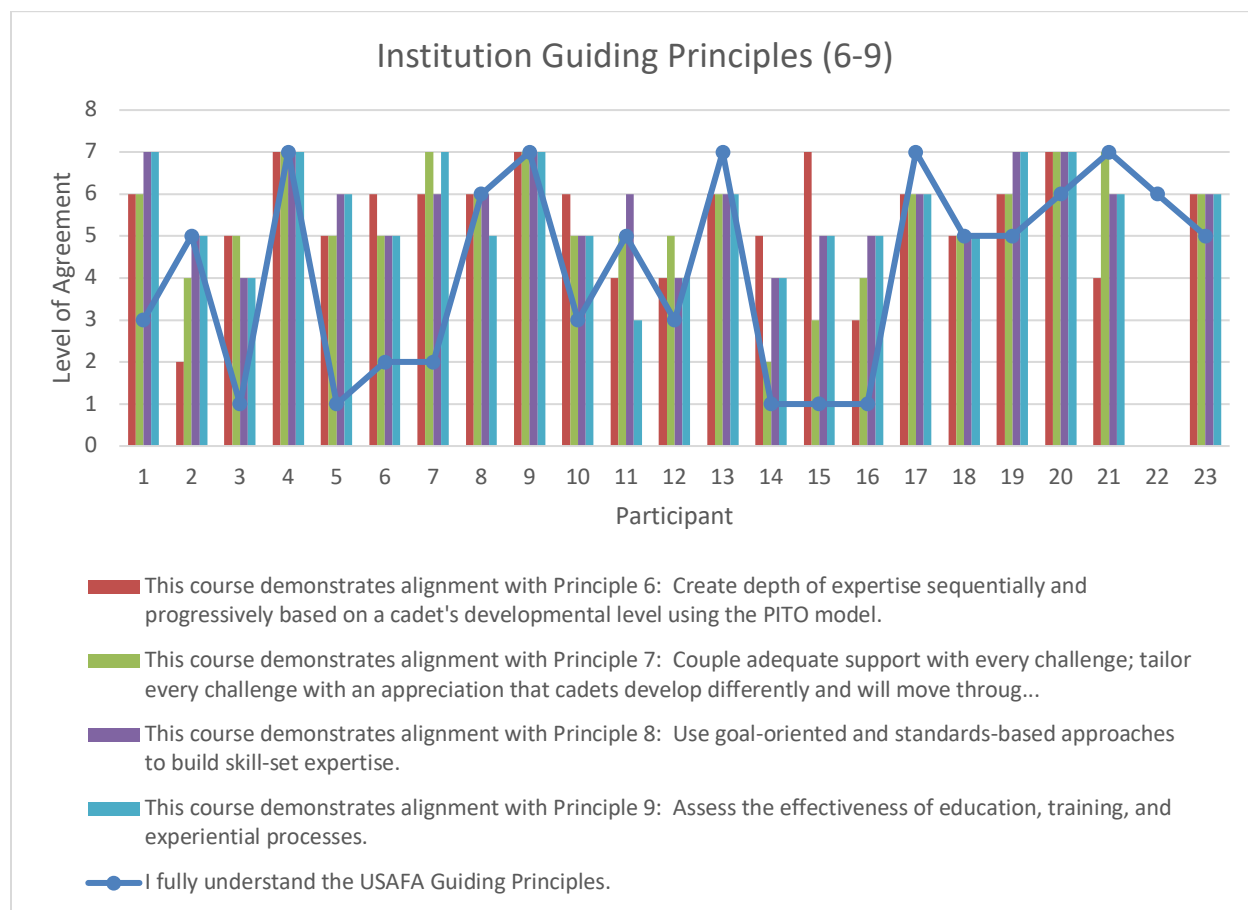
Figure 16*Combined Results: Institution Guiding Principles 1-5*

Figure 17*Combined Results: Institution Guiding Principles 6-9*

The combined results for the Institution Learning Outcomes are divided into two graphs. The first graph highlights the learning outcomes associated with critical thinking, clear communication, the human condition, cultures, and societies, leadership, teamwork, and organizational management, and ethics and respect for human dignity. Each of these outcomes can be linked to the discipline of behavioral sciences and leadership. Alternatively, the second graph focuses on the outcomes of application of engineering methods, scientific reasoning and the principles of science, national security of the American republic, and warrior ethos as airmen and citizens. These specific outcomes are less closely linked with the discipline of behavioral sciences and leadership.

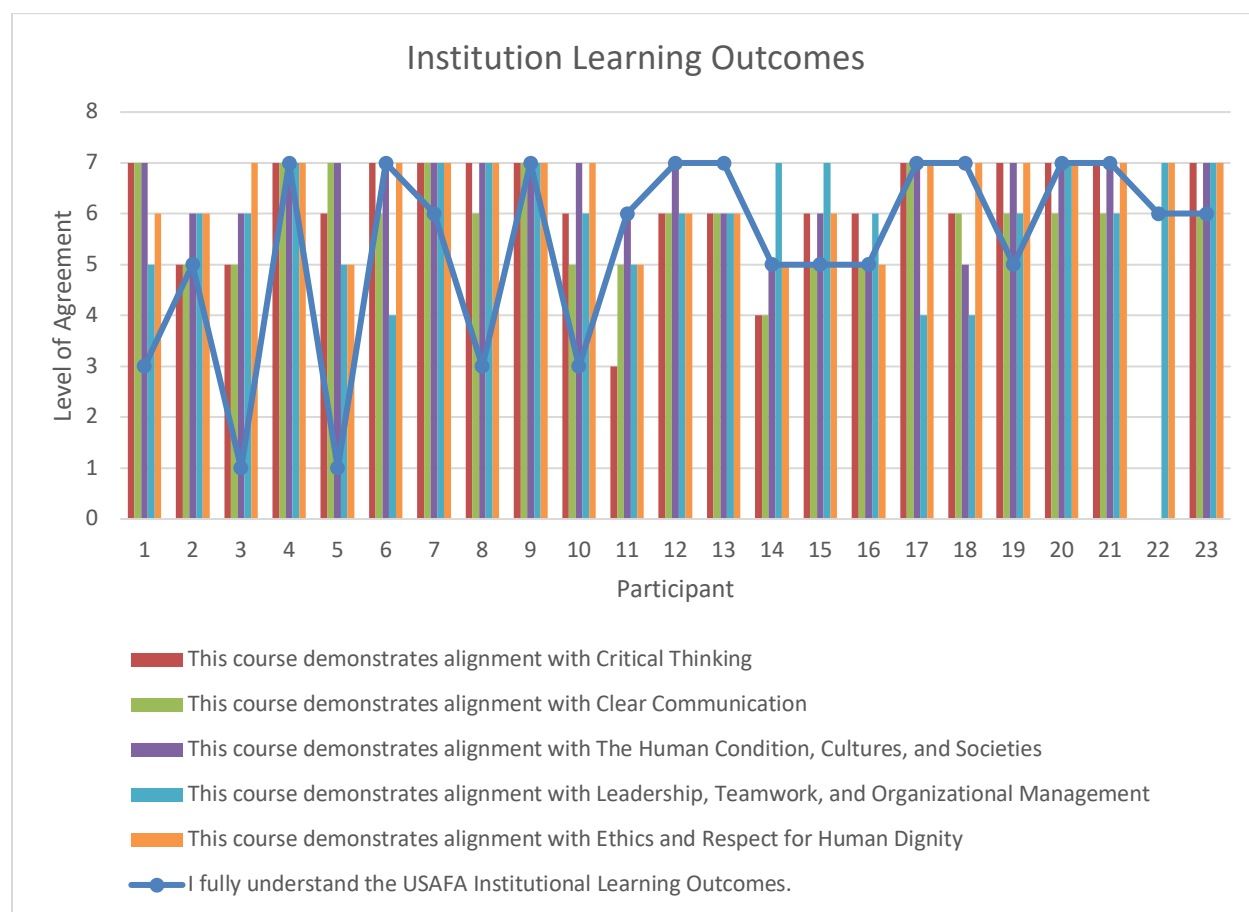
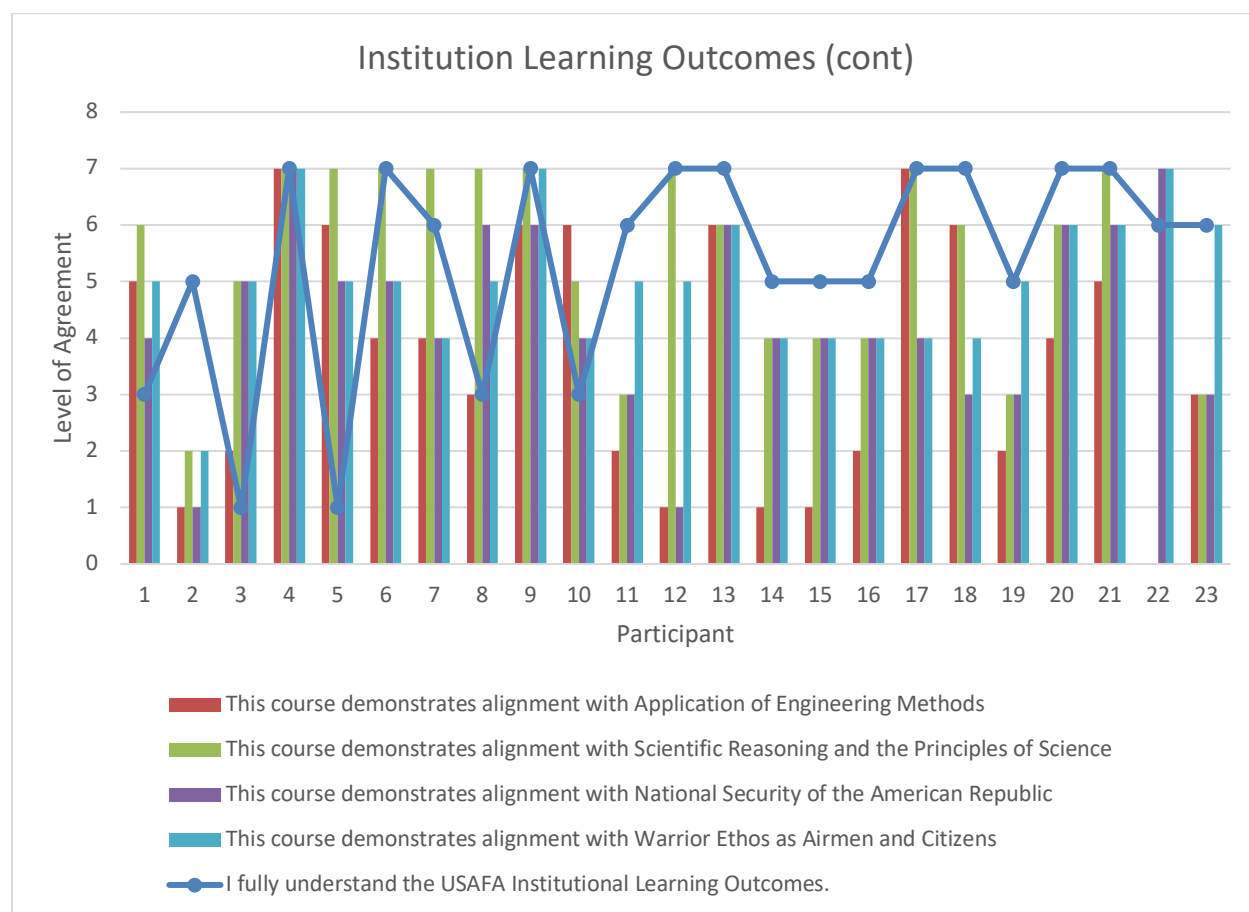
Figure 18*Combined Results: Institution Learning Outcomes*

Figure 19

Combined Results: Institution Learning Outcomes (cont.)



The below frequency and mean table was adjusted to reflect frequency and mean responses based on the assessment of personal understanding of 4 - *Neutral* or higher, all personal understanding with any level of disagreement was removed and is reported as blank (see Table 11).

Table 11*Frequency and Average of Survey Responses – Adjusted Course Alignment*

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
1	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Mission – Nurture and empower cadets and faculty to grow professionally and personally in a culture of care, respect, and scientific thinking.	11	6	2	0	0	0	0	4	6.47
2	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Vision – The Air and Space Force's premier organization for the teaching, advancement, and application of Behavioral Sciences.	12	5	1	0	0	0	0	5	6.61
3	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Objectives (Goals).	8	7	1	1	0	0	0	6	6.29
3a	This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 1: Deliver world-class education experiences using scientific thinking in psychology and sociology as our foundation.	10	5	1	0	1	0	0	6	6.35
3b	This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 2: Cultivate a community of leaders dedicated to the application, advancement, and clear communication of our disciplinary knowledge.	7	8	2	1	0	0	0	5	6.17
3c	This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 3: Use empirically driven content and analysis to develop inclusive leaders who respect the human dignity of all people.	12	4	1	0	1	0	0	5	6.44
4	This course demonstrates alignment with the DFBL Learning Outcomes.	6	4	4	1	0	0	0	8	6.00

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
4a	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 1: Develop scientific thinking using psychology and sociology as a foundation to be able to advance knowledge in the field.	7	4	6	0	0	0	0	6	6.06
4b	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 2: Apply scholarship within the field to contemporary issues, to include Air Force, Space Force, and Joint Operation.	8	3	4	1	0	1	0	6	5.88
4c	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 3: Communicate knowledge of psychology and sociology.	8	4	3	1	1	0	0	6	6.00
4d	This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 4: Serve as an inclusive leader who respects the dignity of all people.	12	5	0	0	0	0	0	6	6.71
5	This course demonstrates alignment with the <i>USAF Mission Statement</i> – To educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force and Space Force in service to our Nation.	9	7	4	0	0	0	0	3	6.25
6	This course demonstrates alignment with the USAFA Vision Statement - To serve as the Air and Space Forces' premier institution for developing leaders of character.	6	12	1	0	0	0	0	4	6.26
7	This course demonstrates alignment with the Leader of Character Framework.	6	11	2	2	0	0	0	2	6.00
7a	This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 1: Owning the Process: Own - pursuit of your identity (a) your attitude & effort, (b) your duty, (c) your commitments, and (d) your role in development.	8	6	5	1	1	0	0	2	5.90

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
7b	This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 2: Engaging in Purposeful Experiences: Engage - purposeful experiences Individual Role (assess, challenge & support) / Organizational Role (assess, challenge & support).	7	7	5	2	1	0	0	1	5.77
7c	This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 3: Practicing Habits of Thought and Actions: Practice - habits of thought & actions (a) awareness, (b) reasoning, (c) deciding, and (d) acting.	8	6	2	3	2	0	0	2	5.71
7d	This course demonstrates alignment with A Leader of Character, someone who: (a) Lives honorably by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Core Values, (b) Lifts people to their best possible selves, and (c) Elevates performance toward a common and noble purpose.	11	8	2	0	1	0	0	1	6.27
8	This course demonstrates alignment with the PITO Model. Personal (Follower), Interpersonal (Wingman), Team (Tactical), and Organization	5	3	6	2	1	0	0	6	5.53
8a	This course demonstrates alignment with Personal (Follower)	4	3	6	2	1	0	0	7	5.44
8b	This course demonstrates alignment with Interpersonal (Wingman)	4	7	5	1	0	0	0	6	5.82
8c	This course demonstrates alignment with Team (Tactical)	4	4	5	3	0	0	1	6	5.29
8d	This course demonstrates alignment with Organization	4	4	4	3	1	0	1	6	5.18
9	This course demonstrates alignment with the Leadership Growth Model (LGM). Expectations and Inspiration, Instruction, Feedback, and Reflection	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	14	5.89

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
9a	This course demonstrates alignment with Expectations and Inspiration - the leader critically appraises the situation, his or her own skills, and the skills of the follower; the leader then sets developmental expectations with the follower. The leader also provides inspiration to the follower by developing a shared understanding of purpose.	3	3	1	2	0	0	1	13	5.30
9b	This course demonstrates alignment with Instruction - to help the follower meet the leader's, follower's, and organization's expectations and objectives.	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	13	5.70
9c	This course demonstrates alignment with Feedback - as the follower works toward these objectives, the leader coaches and mentors the follower, assesses the follower's competency and provides feedback throughout their engagement.	5	0	1	2	0	0	1	14	5.44
9d	This course demonstrates alignment with Reflection - (where the leader and follower review their expectations, instructions, and feedback) crystallizes any lessons learned and prepares participants to enter the next cycle.	5	1	1	1	0	0	1	14	5.67
10	This course demonstrates alignment with the Guiding Principles.	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	13	6.20
10a	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 1: Align the USAFA experience with accepted USAF practices.	3	6	2	1	0	0	0	11	5.92
10b	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 2: Emphasize cadet ownership and accountability for their own development.	6	4	2	0	0	0	0	11	6.33

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
10c	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 3: Ensure all leaders and followers gain from each developmental experience, including both successes and failures.	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	11	6.08
10d	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 4: Establish a common core of experiences and multiple paths to similar outcomes.	4	6	1	1	0	0	0	11	6.08
10e	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 5: Strike an appropriate balance between quality and quantity of development experiences.	1	6	3	1	1	0	0	11	5.42
10f	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 6: Create depth of expertise sequentially and progressively based on a cadet's developmental level using the PITO model.	3	5	1	2	0	1	0	11	5.50
10g	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 7: Couple adequate support with every challenge; tailor every challenge with an appreciation that cadets develop differently and will move through the process at different speeds.	4	5	2	1	0	0	0	11	6.00
10h	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 8: Use goal-oriented and standards-based approaches to build skill-set expertise.	4	6	2	0	0	0	0	11	6.17
10i	This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 9: Assess the effectiveness of education, training, and experiential processes.	4	4	3	0	1	0	0	11	5.83
11	This course demonstrates alignment with the USAFA Institutional Learning Outcomes.	4	8	1	0	0	0	0	10	6.23

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
11a	This course demonstrates alignment with Critical Thinking – to apply self-aware, informed, and reflective reasoning for problem solving and decision making in the absence of ideal information.	9	5	1	1	1	0	0	6	6.18
11b	This course demonstrates alignment with Clear Communication – to express ideas in writing or in a prepared, purposeful presentation with the intent to enhance knowledge, foster understanding, and stimulate new thinking by the receivers.	4	8	4	1	0	0	0	6	5.88
11c	This course demonstrates alignment with Application of Engineering Methods – to understand the opportunities, requirements, and constraints imposed by the scientific and mathematical workings of the universe, supported by knowledge of the current and projected state of technology.	2	3	1	3	1	3	4	6	3.65
11d	This course demonstrates alignment with Scientific Reasoning and the Principles of Science – to apply scientific habits of mind, including proficiency in the nature of science, scientific reasoning, and the principles of science.	7	3	0	3	3	1	0	6	5.29
11e	This course demonstrates alignment with The Human Condition, Cultures, and Societies – to comprehend what it means to be human, the individual situated in a culture and society, and the interactions of people from different socio-cultural milieus.	10	4	3	0	0	0	0	6	6.41
11f	This course demonstrates alignment with Leadership, Teamwork, and Organizational Management – to apply character-based leadership principles at the personal, interpersonal, team, and organizational levels.	8	6	1	3	0	0	0	5	6.06

	Question	Frequency								Mean
		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	blank	
11g	This course demonstrates alignment with Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity – to recognize ethical alternatives among the options available, use ethical judgment to select the best alternative, and act consistently to respect the dignity of all affected persons.	11	4	3	0	0	0	0	5	6.44
11h	This course demonstrates alignment with National Security of the American Republic – to possess the knowledge necessary to protect the fundamental values and core interests of the United States and recognize the broader political context in which military force must be employed.	2	4	1	5	4	0	2	5	4.28
11i	This course demonstrates alignment with Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens – to persevere despite physical and mental hardships, embrace the oath of office and the profession of arms, adopt the core values, and value all Airmen.	3	4	4	6	0	1	0	5	5.06

Discussion

From the interview analysis, three specific themes developed. The first theme was course material, the second was objectives, and the third was assessment. The Discussion section will compare the results of the data collection and analysis from this study. Additionally, the study findings will be reviewed in relation to scholarly literature.

Based on the identified frequency, the first and most predominant theme to emerge from the interview data analysis was course material. As discussed previously, the core leadership courses had undergone significant changes in course material and structure over the last decade. The frequency of codes, while some overlapping, identified the course material as the most dominant theme. This was evidenced by several of the responses given by the leadership

instructors who were interviewed. When asked about the specific courses the instructors taught, the responses provided more often than not, based on the frequency of this theme being at a staggering 53%, centered on the course materials for their class. These course materials include, but are not limited to, the syllabus, required reading materials for students, and assignments. Since this is a core course, the course materials are standard and should not be modified by the individual instructor without approval from the department head. One of the comments made by individual instructors included, “We need to be more intentional to allow individuals to develop a deep understanding of the course material.” This specific comment was made not only about the students in the course, but also for the instructors teaching the course. More than one comment was made regarding the need to improve the assignments, including “improve the collaborative learning activities,” and “collaborative learning activities can be improved.” Additionally, the topic of finding course readings that were more relevant to the student experience and easier to read and understand was mentioned by over half of the interview participants. Lastly, when addressing the course material specifically, one participant expressed the prime opportunity proved within our leadership course and advocated for the department to better “explore the behavioral science context in a manner that can have broad positive impact, within our organization and in the Air Force and the leaders it creates.”

Based on the identified frequency of use, the second theme was centered on objectives, with a focus of approximately 26% of the findings. Based on the data analysis, there are some existing overlaps across the three themes. However, the researcher categorized the codes based on the closest interpretation of the responses to the identified themes and only considered each use of the code for one specific theme. When asked about the specific course objectives taught in the three leadership courses, the results were mixed. Some instructors felt as if the objectives

were solid, while others found them to be lacking. This was evident by one participant stating, “There is no intentional alignment of course objectives,” and another saying, “The lesson objectives align to the course outcomes” and that their course “aligns perfectly with the P in the PITO model” and “aligns perfectly with the LTOM outcome.” Additionally, one of the participants stated, “The lesson objectives are the minimum they should be learning, not the maximum,” when asked about the effectiveness of the objectives. This was evidence that the objectives are still in need of refinement.

Finally, the theme of assessment developed with just under 21% based on the code frequency found in the analysis. However, there was mixed response on assessments and the need for improvements. When discussing the assessment aspect of the course, one participant stated, “[Assessments] may be a bit inverted, we need to flip the GR to assess post-lecture and keep quizzes on the more simplified end of did you do the reading.” While another struggled to answer their own question of “are they able to articulate what is needed to be articulated?” when providing feedback on the effectiveness of the current course assessments. Another instructor provided the following response when asked about their view of assessment effectiveness, “Not great for learning assessment, 40% are reading assessments (quizzes), GR is okay regarding the MC, the essays are better for assessment, but the practicum is scaled but doesn’t measure exactly what they learned but focus on application.” Lastly, one of the instructors, who was also a course director, stated, “We might need to do a little better aligning our assessments with our lesson objectives.”

An analysis of the documents revealed many opportunities for curriculum scaffolding and alignment; however, this does not appear to be clearly communicated or defined. Based on this analysis, the codes and themes from the interviews were considered, and a noticeably clear

theme surfaced: curriculum mapping.

While curriculum maps for each of the individual courses were identified above, there was no clear scaffolding identified within the courses and no current curriculum map for the course sequence as a whole. Even though there have been improvements in the individual courses, most instructors are only exposed to and assigned to teach one level of the course. This approach only intentionally exposes these instructors to a third of the curriculum. If instructors are to be able to ensure their students can visualize a clear picture of the material to be learned, they need to be provided with all the tools to make this happen.

Based on the analysis of the survey data, faculty development was the theme that developed due in part to several individuals responding that they did not feel they had a full understanding of either their own course information, the departmental-level information, or the institution information needed to successfully meet the mission needs. When analyzing the survey data, it was determined that there was some degree of full understanding of one or more of the assessment questions for 69% of the respondents. According to Doucet (2019), today's teachers need to have many characteristics, including the ability to be "ever-evolving lifelong learners who constantly self-reflect on their practice" (p. 34). They must also be engaged in research, seek out and find the right mentor, supervisor, and career guide, all while developing and honing ways to reach students on an individual level and focusing on "individual development in content, literacies, competencies, social-emotional learning and character" (Doucet, 2019, p. 34).

Summary

Data were collected and analyzed through three collection methods: qualitative interviews with core leadership instructors, a qualitative review of documents, and a quantitative survey of department teaching faculty. This chapter provided the analysis of the data collected across these three methods and identified specific themes with relevance to address the central question of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to improve alignment of curriculum in core leadership courses at a military academy located in the Midwest. The problem was the current core leadership curriculum had undergone significant changes over the past few years to include changes in leadership, delivery format, and even course structure, which had significantly affected the alignment within and across these courses. This chapter of the report presents the Problem, the Proposed Solution(s) to the Problem, the Resources Needed, the Funds Needed, the Roles and Responsibilities, the Timeline, the Solution Implications, the Evaluation Plan, and the Summary.

Restatement of the Problem

The problem was that the current core leadership curriculum had undergone significant changes over the past several years. According to the 2015 through 2020 Curriculum Handbooks, the core leadership courses have changed not only in course name but also in format, structure, and alignment under a new institutional outcome and overall course description. The leadership experienced a turnover, the curriculum was reformatted, and the structure and delivery of the course were also revamped. All of these changes culminated in a significant impact to the alignment of the curriculum being delivered and resonated across each of the leadership courses. With the newly created department learning outcomes, there was a strong need for a thorough examination of the department curriculum, especially within the leadership courses.

Proposed Solution to the Central Question

The purpose of this study is to provide recommendations to improve alignment of the

course leadership courses. The central research question for this study was, how can curriculum alignment be improved in core leadership courses? Based on a review of the scholarly literature and data collection and analysis, two practical solutions are recommended to answer the central research questions. The recommendations are:

1. Establish a faculty development plan.
2. Establish an interdisciplinary lead.

Recommendation for Faculty Development Plan

The first component of the solution is to establish a faculty development plan. “Strong leaders are not born—they are continually developed through iterative professional learning opportunities” (Sanzo, 2016, p. 1). Based on the data, the recommendation for this faculty development plan includes three mandatory milestones for all department personnel. Additional optional milestones for professional and academic progress can also be added. The mandatory milestones are onboarding, leadership course audits, and teaching and curriculum workshops. According to Senge et al. (2012), a teacher’s creativity, training, and capabilities are not enough to sustain them long-term; thus, faculty development and collaboration are necessary for continued success both in and out of the classroom. Implementing a hard audit approach will allow instructors at all levels to have time to learn the material and witness a variety of teaching styles on a structured schedule. Faculty development through regular meetings, auditing, and teaching observations can help the development process for instructors and contribute to student success.

Onboarding

Onboarding is an essential task for new and returning faculty. Not only can onboarding offer the opportunity for new faculty to feel welcomed and accepted, but it can also allow current

faculty the chance to get to know new personnel (Richter et al., 2022). Companies spend a lot of time and money recruiting and maintaining the quality employees needed to accomplish the mission (Newman, 2019). When considering employee culture from a human resources lens, it may be easier to understand the significant role of a quality onboarding program in readying new instructors and allowing multiple touchpoints to ensure they have the tools and connections to start in their roles successfully.

When responding to survey questions related to course-specific understanding of the objectives, activities, assessments, and reading material, 96% of the respondents replied with some level of agreement to full understanding. However, the level of agreement drops to only 73%, with 5% being neutral and 22% reporting some level of disagreement with having a full understanding of the departmental mission, vision, objectives, and learning outcomes. Even more concerning is the fact that 26% reported they disagreed with having a full understanding of institutional vision, mission, learning outcomes, and more. For this recommendation, the onboarding process would include providing all members with access and exposure to the institutions' materials needed for the job and understanding what is needed for curriculum delivery.

Leadership Course Audits

If instructors are to ensure their students can visualize a clear picture of the material to be learned, they must be provided with all the tools to make this happen. Research by Cantor et al. (2018) highlighted the science of the brain when it comes to development and learning and stated, "Development of the brain is an experience-dependent process" (p. 5); thus, course audits would provide the experience of being in the classroom as their students would also experience. This would be akin to giving an artist only one of the primary colors to paint with and expecting

them to produce a painting with significant depth and tone. Instructors need to be comfortable with thinking about the courses as works of art that may need to be improved on and refined to ensure the picture remains clear and concise (Dance, 2023). One needs to be provided, at a minimum, with the basics to be allowed for a clearer picture to be produced. The second component of the faculty development plan is to require all faculty to hard audit the Leadership 100, 200, and 300 courses regardless of academic discipline. All new instructors would be required to hard audit all three levels before teaching any of the leadership courses, and all current faculty would be required to complete their audit of the three courses within a year of implementation. Strom and Martin (2022) highlighted research findings where participants preferred to learn from their fellow teachers and colleagues, and these relationships lead to pedagogical growth through collaboration. As core courses within the institution, leadership courses are delivered to all students. It is important for the faculty and instructors within the department to possess a working knowledge and understanding of these courses in their entirety. One of the interview participants felt strongly that the three courses were aligned and worked together, but then later identified the need for leadership instructors to audit all three classes to understand how the material is scaffolded and stated, “[Instructors] NEED to be exposed to the other levels to understand the integration and how they support/rely on the other lessons.” If instructors are expected to ensure their students can visualize a clear picture of the material they teach, they must be provided with all of the necessary tools.

Teaching and Curriculum Workshops

In higher education, faculty members are typically experts in their field and possess a deep level of discipline-specific knowledge. These individuals are usually not well versed in the science of teaching or curriculum design; as Deraney and Khanfar (2020) stated, “the concepts of

curriculum and alignment are ambiguous to faculty members, particularly in higher education, where the curriculum is often considered merely the course content and syllabus” (p. 85). This lack of educational credentialing and understanding means there is an opportunity for development in this area. Lasrado and Kaul (2021) emphasized the essential need for developing a sufficient level of knowledge before being expected to apply or be evaluated on the ability to demonstrate the outcomes associated with the subject matter. The same can be said for one’s ability to teach the subject material from an academic standpoint.

Additionally, Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), highlighted the significance surrounding an approach to teaching that differs from the prior educational era. This new approach to teaching has to integrate critical thinking, the ability to seek out, analyze, research, synthesize, and apply the concepts in a real way for application beyond the classroom. Therefore, as part of the faculty development plan, all instructors must complete two teaching workshops to include topics in teaching strategies, assessments, and feedback. Additional workshops in curriculum planning, design, and alignment will be required to become a course director; these workshops are optional for all other personnel.

Recommendation for an Interdisciplinary Discipline Lead

Making connections and aligning a single course can be achieved more easily when there is only one instructor. However, the real challenge exists when attempting to create alignment at a programmatic level and for multiple instructors with diverse discipline knowledge. The establishment of an interdisciplinary discipline lead would open the door to creating a systematic approach with an interdisciplinary team of subject matter experts who can collaborate on an interdisciplinary curriculum with integrative course material across multiple levels of the educational experience. An additional focus can be placed on curriculum mapping and alignment

in and across each of the leadership courses. According to Al Dera (2021), “For successful implementation, a curriculum should be mapped and aligned in a timely manner prior to teaching students and should be updated periodically” (p. 573). The current structure of the leadership courses does not afford faculty the time or resources needed to ensure mapping and alignment currently exists and is being taught in a deliberate manner. Identifying an interdisciplinary discipline lead would allow for empowerment and accountability within the leadership courses and the classroom across multiple disciplines. Deraney and Khanfar (2020) posited that this would “allow for continuity of the concepts and sustainability of alignment throughout the program” (p. 93).

Additionally, establishing an interdisciplinary discipline lead would provide a place for the leadership curriculum, at all levels, to belong. The current department structure identifies discipline leads for psychology and sociology, thus codifying ownership within the specified courses belonging to each of these disciplines. However, the same cannot be said for the leadership courses. This lack of categorization leaves these courses with no defined process owner(s) and significantly reduces buy-in from faculty. This lack of buy-in was evidenced in the survey results, with less than half (47.8%) of personnel annotating an interest in teaching the leadership courses. All personnel who expressed an interest in teaching leadership courses were already doing so. When faculty do not have buy-in to the courses they are teaching, it is evident to their students, potentially having negative implications. Due to the leadership courses being designed from an interdisciplinary view, there is a need to have a process owner to ensure the course material is cohesive and understood across all disciplines. There needs to be a clear and shared message within each course and across all the courses, “Evidence shows that the process of creating shared language can enhance the working relationship between individuals” (Hopkins

& Bieter, 2020, pp. 35-36) and can play an essential role in building and maintaining relationships with peers and with students alike.

Resources Needed

The required resources to implement the above recommendations are readily available and accessible within the department and the dean of faculty. For the recommendation for faculty development, the resources needed for onboarding would be access to the necessary institution's documents in either print or electronic means. For auditing, the primary resource needed is time. The scheduler can add the names of personnel assigned to hard audit to the teaching schedule to ensure the time is dedicated to the auditing process. As for the teaching and curriculum workshops, this can be coordinated through the Center for Educational, or coordinated courses can be developed and taught by in-house personnel with the proper resources and tools. Many of these resources and tools can be found online for free.

A potential barrier for all recommendations is always time and staffing. Since most personnel have full teaching loads, there may be little time for attending other courses or being away from the classroom; however, having the class scheduled for a hard audit could help reduce this time burden where possible.

Funds Needed

No additional financial investment beyond the current resource-budgeted funds is needed to generate the proposed solution.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders need to be identified to improve curriculum alignment in core leadership courses. Identifying a plan for the implementation of the recommendations made in this study begins with establishing process owners for each task. The

roles and responsibilities for faculty development are described in this section.

Faculty Development

To solve the problem of curriculum alignment in core leadership courses, it is recommended that a faculty development plan be established and implemented for all current and inbound teaching faculty within the DFBL. While this recommendation does not directly work to align curriculum, it does provide an opportunity for new and current faculty to better understand what the curriculum they teach should align to and directly supports the first step identified in Tyler's (1949) Rationale. Bullough (2019) highlighted the importance of faculty development and the act of teaching, with both required to achieve a balanced and effective approach. In the reflective words of Goodlad (1994, as cited in Bullough, 2019), "the symbiotic joining of the two cultures, however difficult, is essential to the renewal of both schools and the education of educators, and that the two processes are best undertaken simultaneously" (p. 11). Role and responsibility designations are an essential step toward success.

Senior Leadership

For this specific recommendation, senior leadership will be defined to include the members of the Front Office Group (FOG), supervisory personnel, and the Development Directorate. The FOG, in collaboration with the Development Directorate, will draft a policy letter stating the requirements and expectations for all faculty and codify the role(s) supervisors will play in implementing the new expectations.

The role senior leadership holds in the development and implementation of faculty development cannot be understated. Davis et al. (2019) put out a call to action stating:

The leaders in any system are that system's architects and the behaviors observed in any system are a direct result of the architecture (processes, incentives, assumptions, etc.)

within that system. Hence, leadership determines the degree to which any event will emphasize surviving and/or thriving. To do so intentionally requires the specification of each event's objectives in advance, as discussed in the introduction, along with specific metrics to measure outcomes. (p. 93)

It is essential for senior leadership to lay out and demonstrate the importance of the faculty development plan for successful execution and sustainability purposes. Finally, the role of evaluating the purpose, as the final step in Tyler's (1949) Rationale, will be the responsibility of senior leadership as it relates to the department faculty.

Individuals – Department Teaching Faculty

The role of individuals will be to first attend the established onboarding, as applicable. Secondly, new personnel will be scheduled to hard audit the three leadership courses within the first semester they arrive. For current faculty members, they will need to work with their supervisor and the department scheduler to be scheduled to hard audit the three leadership courses within a year of implementation. The department head would be the only waiver authority for time extensions and only for extenuating circumstances. Finally, all personnel will schedule and attend the required teaching and curriculum workshops. Prior workshops attended through the Center for Educational Innovation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Completion of the Dean's Teaching Certificate within the last five years will be considered as completion of this requirement. The primary goal of the faculty development plan is to improve curriculum alignment in and across the core leadership courses. Therefore, individuals will also be responsible for their role in Steps 2 and 3 of the Tyler (1949) Rationale. Individuals will not only need to be able to reflect on and identify their own educational experiences related to purpose but to use these developmental engagements to organize the experiences with their

approach to teaching and for their students.

Interdisciplinary Discipline Lead

The second recommendation for improving curriculum alignment in core leadership courses is to establish an interdisciplinary discipline lead. Regardless of one's primary discipline, or in some instances, disciplines, to be an effective teacher and to develop Leaders of Character, one must be a professional teacher. Doucet (2019) defined what it means to be a professional teacher as someone who is not just knowledgeable within a limited scope or discipline and stated, "A large part of being a professional teacher is the ability to build relationships to help everyone develop to their full potential" (p. 17).

Leadership cannot continue to be taught the same as it was 10 or even 5 years ago simply because our nation and the "leaders we need" do not look the same as they did then. The landscape is changing exponentially, and "the world is a complex, fluid place requiring adaptive reactions" (Currie et al., 2012, p. 3). Examining and understanding leadership from many different angles requires someone willing to explore past their comfort area and develop a curriculum as a collaborative process.

Senior Leadership

For this recommendation, *senior leadership* is defined as the FOG. Since the FOG, as a collaborative body, is made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences, they would be ideal for identifying an individual within the department to lead the interdisciplinary discipline and work within the confines of the requirements for the continual development and improvements needed for the leadership curriculum. Once the individual is identified and moves into the position, the FOG will help guide them and ensure they have the right tools and support for success.

Discipline Lead - Interdisciplinary

Once identified by the FOG, the interdisciplinary discipline lead will develop a curriculum statement providing a broad overview of the subject planned with a well-defined idea of how it will be taught (Steward, 2020). Once the curriculum statement has been developed and approved, a curriculum plan will be created to provide a catalog of topics and skills the instructors will deliver throughout the differing levels of class. This plan will identify alignment within and across each of the lessons and courses. The plan will provide all instructors an understanding of the lesson topic/theory, objective, the knowledge/skill(s) to be acquired, assessment, link(s) to prior/subsequent learning, and application of the lesson topic. The curriculum statement and plan will be a roadmap for all students and instructors in and across all the leadership courses. Additionally, these tools will ensure the curriculum is aligned and be a deliberate guide for highlighting the alignment (Palastanga, 2021). The interdisciplinary discipline lead, with the support and guidance of senior leadership, will directly coordinate and execute the final three steps in Tyler's (1949) Rationale by identifying educational experiences related to purpose, organizing the experience of instructors and students, and evaluating the purposes of the course and the department goals and objectives.

Timeline

The plan for when the recommendations will be implemented is a necessity for successful implementation to help improve the curriculum alignment in core leadership courses. The timeline for the recommendation for the faculty development plan will be addressed in this section.

Faculty Development Plan

The Faculty Development Plan will take approximately 18 months and will be rolled out

in two phases. Phase 1 will target all newly arriving personnel and will be implemented for the Fall 2023 semester with a final due date one year later. For current faculty, the implementation date will not be until 1 January 2024 to allow for a staggered auditing schedule and deconfliction of currently assigned duties and teaching schedules.

Table 12

Timeline for Faculty Development Plan Implementation

Date	Action Item
1-Jun-23	Senior Leadership notifies department personnel of new Faculty Development Plan
1-Jul-23	Development Directorate, in collaboration with the FOG, finalizes the new Faculty Development Plan
10-Jul-23	New Faculty Development Plan is implemented for all newly arriving personnel
17-Jul-23	New Faculty Onboarding - All newly arriving personnel are required to attend
1-Aug-23	Scheduling confirms all newly arriving personnel are scheduled to hard audit the leadership courses within the Fall semester. If scheduled to teach leadership, personnel should be assigned within the first go
10-Aug-23	Development Directorate sends out a listing of all applicable professional development courses that meet the requirements identified in the Faculty Development Plan
1-Jan-24	New Faculty Development Plan is implemented for all currently assigned personnel
5-Jan-24	All personnel request to schedule Leadership audits for the Spring semester must be coordinated through the Department Scheduler
1-Jun-24	Onboarding schedule for Fall 24 arriving personnel to be finalized
1-Jul-24	All onboarding requirements finalized
15-Jul-24	Fall 2024 Onboarding Week
1-Aug-24	All Fall 24 hard audits finalized
31-Dec-24	Deadline for all personnel to have completed Leadership hard audits and the two Teaching and Curriculum profession development courses

Interdisciplinary Discipline Lead

Implementation of the establishing an interdisciplinary discipline lead position will take 6 months due to the department structure already being established for the upcoming semester.

Table 13

Timeline of Interdisciplinary Discipline Lead Implementation

Date	Action Item
31-Jul-23	Senior Leadership identifies specific department personnel who would be suitable for the position
1-Sep-23	Individual is identified and notified
1-Oct-23	Department is notified of new position and individual who will be appointed for the role
1-Dec-23	Transition of department duties
1-Jan-24	New Interdisciplinary Discipline position officially established
31-Jan-24	Curriculum Statement is finalized and approved
1-Feb-24	Interdisciplinary lead meets with the other Discipline leads to identify support roles and functions
15-Mar-24	Interdisciplinary lead meets with Curriculum lead to work on CCP for updating the Leadership Core course descriptions and validate the COI is correct for upcoming AY
31-Mar-24	Curriculum Plan is finalized and approved
1-Apr-24	Interdisciplinary lead meets with the Academics to finalize teaching staff for upcoming AY
15-Apr-24	Finalizes way forward with FOG
1-May-24	Interdisciplinary lead meets with teaching staff to begin training and course familiarization

Solution Implications

The stakeholders involved must understand that these recommended changes are not

quick fixes and will require work and time commitments from all involved. In fact, research from Janis et al. (2019) found that observations of teacher candidates highlighted gaps in the pedagogies between what was observed and how the candidates imagined their classroom engagement and teaching. These gaps highlight the work needed to effectively integrate interdisciplinary teachings. In the words of John Goodlad (2004),

Changing schools is a little like reducing weight. Weight taken off slowly by changes in diet and regular exercise tends to stay off. Weight taken off quickly by short-term, quick reduction fads tends to come back. If you skip the time-consuming processes of involving the people who have a stake in a school, the first-level changes quickly attained fade, often strengthening the hold of the deep structure that continues to prevail. (p. 223)

However, an interdisciplinary approach to any experience can prove to be challenging. Nevertheless, the benefits of exploring the topic of leadership from diverse perspectives would yield a much deeper understanding of the topic (Muthukrishna et al., 2021). Additionally, Alfauzan and Tarchouna (2017) found that a well-designed curriculum can maximize the achievement of learning outcomes. Through the use and understanding of the curriculum statement and plan, all stakeholders will have an increased knowledge of the course alignment and an increased ability to apply the concepts in and out of the classroom.

Evaluation Plan

To assess the effectiveness of the proposed solutions, the survey used in this study will be readministered to all department personnel at the end of each semester to identify focus areas for future personal and professional development opportunities. The desired outcome is a rise in the overall scores regarding a personal assessment of understanding and a course assessment of alignment with department and institutional principles. Sealy (2020) found a need for a general

introduction and understanding of concepts in order to form a deeper level of knowledge about the subject. Therefore, professional development and auditing experiences will provide this opportunity for increased knowledge.

Another opportunity for evaluation will be through the use of reflective writing assignments. Each instructor will be asked to submit a short reflection at the end of each lesson during the auditing process. These short reflections will focus on the areas highlighted in the course plan and how they relate to the overall expectations of the course as a whole. Following each completed course audit, the auditing instructor will provide reflective feedback to the instructor for which they audited. This peer-to-peer feedback can help break down any barriers that may exist across disciplines, positions, backgrounds, and more. Graesser et al. (2022) highlighted the six basic types of learning that, when applied appropriately, can effectively increase the impact of learning outcomes. The use of habit forming and conditioning, observational learning, implicit pattern learning, learning of facts, and learning by making inferences through reasoning and mental models are all integrated into the auditing experience by having the instructors attend the course and participate as students would, but also as they would be teaching the materials (Graesser et al., 2022; NASEM, 2018). The experiences of participating in the curriculum in the role of learner will offer opportunities for instructors to learn the material from alternate disciplinary backgrounds and potentially be exposed to differing teaching approaches.

Finally, evaluative opportunities exist in student feedback at the end of each academic semester. This feedback could help provide additional insight into instructional approaches and students' understanding of the material. Since this feedback is not always timely due to the course structure, this information will be less immediate and may not offer as much regarding

corrective actions if needed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to improve the problem of curriculum alignment in the core leadership courses at a military academy in the Midwest. The problem was the current core leadership courses had become disjointed over the past few years due to a number of factors which included changes in structure, leadership, format, and even COVID-19. Data were collected to help inform this problem, and this chapter covered the recommendations for addressing the central question, identified resources and funds needed for implementation of the recommendations, the roles and responsibilities, and a timeline for implementation. The two biggest takeaways from this study were that there needs to be a solid process and process owner to ensure alignment and faculty development at a variety of levels, and this is necessary for all classes to ensure the successful implementation of the mission.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Site Approval

1 September 2022

Dear Gloria Kuzmicki:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Recommendation to Improve Curriculum Alignment in Core Leadership Courses, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership and receive and utilize the historical document data from the core Leadership courses for your research study upon REDACTED INSTITUTION IRB approval.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- ✓ I will authorize access to our DFBL faculty list to Gloria Kuzmicki, and Gloria Kuzmicki may use the list to contact our DFBL faculty to invite them to participate in her research study.
- ✓ I grant permission for Gloria Kuzmicki to contact the core leadership instructors to invite them to participate in her research study.
- ✓ The requested data WILL BE STRIPPED of all identifying information before it is provided to the researcher.
- ✓ I am requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Redacted Name

Redacted Name

Redacted Title

Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership

Redacted Institution

Redacted Address

Redacted Phone Number

Redacted Phone Number

Redacted Phone Number

Pronouns: he/him/his

Appendix B: IRB Results

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 8, 2022

Gloria Kuzmicki
Amy Jones

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-895 Recommendations to Improve Curriculum Alignment in Core Leadership Courses

Dear Gloria Kuzmicki and Amy Jones,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research because

(1) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Based on your understanding of the course, describe how effective the lesson objectives communicate what the student should know upon completion of the lesson? Please explain your response.
2. Based on your understanding of the course, describe how effective the assessments measure what the student has learned in the course? Please explain your response.
3. Based on your understanding of the course, describe how effective the course objectives communicate what the student should know upon completion of the course? Please explain your response.
4. Describe how the learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, and course assessments align with...
 - a. The Leaders of Character Framework?
 - b. The PITO Model?
 - c. The LTOM Learning Outcome?
 - d. DFBLs Learning Outcomes?
 - e. The Other DFBL Leadership Courses (100/200/300)?
5. What is working well in the course you teach (specific strengths)?
6. What evidence do you have to support this?
7. How would you improve the current course you teach (specific areas of improvement)?
8. How would you improve the integration of the course you teach with the other two leadership courses (improved flow)?
9. What is your definition of leadership?
10. What is your definition of character?

11. Is there anything you would like to add to this discussion?

Appendix D: Survey

How to Improve Curriculum Alignment in Core Leadership Courses

The purpose of this survey is to seek ways to improve curriculum alignment in core leadership courses. The data collected will be used to make recommendations to improve the alignment of core leadership curriculum. This survey is for educational research purposes and participation in this survey is completely voluntary.

Instructions: Complete the survey by annotating one response for each of the provided prompts.

The survey has three sections: demographics, personal familiarity and understanding, and assessment of course alignment and takes approximately nine minutes to complete. The demographic section has nine questions; the personal understanding sections contains 16 Likert-style prompts; and the assessment of course alignment section contains 11 Likert-style prompts for the department level and 37 Likert-style prompts, to include sub-prompts, for the organizational level. If you teach more than one course (any semester), you are welcomed and encouraged to complete the assessment of course alignment section for each of the courses you teach. Any and all responses are appreciated. Please return all survey responses to Gloria Kuzmicki within five duty days. Thank you for your participation and willingness to contribute to this study.

The survey will take approximately nine minutes to complete.

Demographic Questions

Instructions: Provide the best response for each question below.

1. Which category best describes you?

☐ Military – Colonel

☐ Military – Lieutenant Colonel

- ☐ Military – Major
- ☐ Military – Captain
- ☐ Military – Other
- ☐ Civilian – Prior Military
- ☐ Civilian – No Prior Military Service
- ☐ Civilian – Other

2. Which category best describes your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

3. Which category best describes your age?

- ☐ 20-29 years
- ☐ 30-39 years
- ☐ 40-49 years
- ☐ 50-59 years
- ☐ 59+ years
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. How many years of teaching experience do you currently have at each academic level?

- _____ K-12 Education
- _____ 2-year College
- _____ 4-year College
- _____ Graduate College

_____ Military Training

_____ Total Years

5. Which category best describes your academic specialty? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Clinical Psychology
- ☐ Education / Leadership
- ☐ Psychology / Counseling
- ☐ Sociology / Social Work
- ☐ Other

6. Which category best describes your level of education?

- ☐ Master's Degree (MA / MBA / MS)
- ☐ ABD – Doctorate
- ☐ Doctorate (EdD / PhD / PsyD)
- ☐ Other

7. Which category best describes your academic rank?

- ☐ Guest Instructor
- ☐ Instructor / Senior Instructor
- ☐ Assistant Professor
- ☐ Associate Professor
- ☐ Full Professor
- ☐ Other

8. Which leadership courses have you taught within DFBL? (select all that apply)

- ☐ None
- ☐ Beh Sci 310

- ☐ 2018-2019 | Leadership 100/200/300
- ☐ 2019-2020 | Leadership 100/200/300
- ☐ 2020-2021 | Leadership 100
- ☐ 2020-2021 | Leadership 200
- ☐ 2020-2021 | Leadership 300
- ☐ 2021-2022 | Leadership 100
- ☐ 2021-2022 | Leadership 200
- ☐ 2021-2022 | Leadership 300
- ☐ Other

9. If you taught earlier versions of the leadership course(s) prior to 2021, would you be interested in completing the Leadership Instructor Interview about your experience teaching the past leadership curriculum?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

Personal Understanding

Instructions: Identify your degree of agreement or disagreement for each of the below prompts:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Neutral, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

10. I fully understand the course level *learning objectives* for the course(s) I teach.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. I fully understand the course level *teaching and learning activities* for the course(s) I teach.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. I fully understand the course level *assessments* for the course(s) I teach.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. I fully understand the course level *reading material* for the course(s) I teach.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. I fully understand the *DFBL Mission Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. I fully understand the *DFBL Vision Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. I fully understand the *DFBL Objectives (Goals)*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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17. I fully understand the *DFBL Expected Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

18. I fully understand the *USAFA Mission Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

19. I fully understand the *USAFA Vision Statement*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

20. I fully understand the *Leaders of Character Framework*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

21. I fully understand the *PITO Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. I fully understand the *Leadership Growth Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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23. I fully understand the *USAFA Guiding Principles*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

24. I fully understand the *USAFA Institutional Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

25. I am interested in teaching Leadership 100, 200, and/or 300.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Assess Course Alignment

This section seeks to identify the instructor's assessment of course alignment at the department and organizational levels. Your responses will be used to establish a benchmark and inform department recommendations for future course design.

Select and identify your course of instruction for the course being assessed. This should be a course you are currently or have recently instructed.

Course being assessed: _____

Which of the below best describes your role in the course identified above?

☐ Instructor

☐ Assistant Course Director

☐ Course Director

Instructions: Identify your degree of agreement or disagreement for each of the below prompts:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Neutral, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

26. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Mission* – Nurture and empower cadets and faculty to grow professionally and personally in a culture of care, respect, and scientific thinking.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

27. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Vision* – The Air and Space Force's premier organization for the teaching, advancement, and application of Behavioral Sciences.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

28. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Objectives (Goals)*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 1: Deliver world-class education experiences using scientific thinking in psychology and sociology as our foundation.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 2: Cultivate a community of leaders dedicated to the application, advancement, and clear communication of our disciplinary knowledge.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Objective 3: Use empirically driven content and analysis to develop inclusive leaders who respect the human dignity of all people.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

29. This course demonstrates alignment with the *DFBL Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 1: Develop scientific thinking using psychology and sociology as a foundation to be able to advance knowledge in the field.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 2: Apply scholarship within the field to contemporary issues, to include Air Force, Space Force, and Joint Operation.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 3: Communicate knowledge of psychology and sociology.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Learning Outcome 4: Serve as an inclusive leader who respects the dignity of all people.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

30. This course demonstrates alignment with the *USAF Mission Statement* – To educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force and Space Force in service to our Nation.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

31. This course demonstrates alignment with the *USAF Vision Statement* – To serve as the Air and Space Forces’ premier institution for developing leaders of character.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

32. This course demonstrates alignment with the *Leader of Character Framework*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 1: Owning the Process: Own - pursuit of your identity | (a) your attitude & effort, (b) your duty, (c) your commitments, and (d) your role in development.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 2: Engaging in Purposeful Experiences: Engage - purposeful experiences | Individual Role (assess, challenge & support) / Organizational Role (assess, challenge & support).

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Pillar 3: Practicing Habits of Thought and Actions: Practice - habits of thought & actions | (a) awareness, (b) reasoning, (c) deciding, and (d) acting.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with A Leader of Character, someone who:
- (a) Lives honorably by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Core Values, (b) Lifts people to their best possible selves, and (c) Elevates performance toward a common and noble purpose.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

33. This course demonstrates alignment with the *PITO Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Personal (Follower)

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Interpersonal (Wingman)

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Team (Tactical)

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

d. This course demonstrates alignment with Organization

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

34. This course demonstrates alignment with the *Leadership Growth Model*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

a. This course demonstrates alignment with Expectations and Inspiration - the leader critically appraises the situation, his or her own skills, and the skills of the follower; the leader then sets developmental expectations with the follower. The leader also provides inspiration to the follower by developing a shared understanding of purpose.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

b. This course demonstrates alignment with Instruction - to help the follower meet the leader's, follower's, and organization's expectations and objectives.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

c. This course demonstrates alignment with Feedback - as the follower works toward these objectives, the leader coaches and mentors the follower, assesses the follower's competency and provides feedback throughout their engagement.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Reflection - (where the leader and follower review their expectations, instructions, and feedback) crystallizes any lessons learned and prepares participants to enter the next cycle.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

35. This course demonstrates alignment with the *Guiding Principles*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 1: Align the USAFA experience with accepted USAF practices.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 2: Emphasize cadet ownership and accountability for their own development.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 3: Ensure all leaders and followers gain from each developmental experience, including both successes and failures.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 4: Establish a common core of experiences and multiple paths to similar outcomes.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- e. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 5: Strike an appropriate balance between quality and quantity of development experiences.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- f. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 6: Create depth of expertise sequentially and progressively based on a cadet's developmental level using the PITO model.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- g. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 7: Couple adequate support with every challenge; tailor every challenge with an appreciation that cadets develop differently and will move through the process at different speeds.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- h. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 8: Use goal-oriented and standards-based approaches to build skill-set expertise.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- i. This course demonstrates alignment with Principle 9: Assess the effectiveness of education, training, and experiential processes.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

36. This course demonstrates alignment with the *USAFA Institutional Learning Outcomes*.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- a. This course demonstrates alignment with Critical Thinking – to apply self-aware, informed, and reflective reasoning for problem solving and decision making in the absence of ideal information.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- b. This course demonstrates alignment with Clear Communication – to express ideas in writing or in a prepared, purposeful presentation with the intent to enhance knowledge, foster understanding, and stimulate new thinking by the receivers.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. This course demonstrates alignment with Application of Engineering Methods – to understand the opportunities, requirements, and constraints imposed by the scientific and mathematical workings of the universe, supported by knowledge of the current and projected state of technology.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- d. This course demonstrates alignment with Scientific Reasoning and the Principles of Science – to apply scientific habits of mind, including proficiency in the nature of science, scientific reasoning, and the principles of science.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- e. This course demonstrates alignment with The Human Condition, Cultures, and Societies – to comprehend what it means to be human, the individual situated in a

culture and society, and the interactions of people from different socio-cultural milieus.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- f. This course demonstrates alignment with Leadership, Teamwork, and Organizational Management – to apply character based leadership principles at the personal, interpersonal, team, and organizational levels.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- g. This course demonstrates alignment with Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity – to recognize ethical alternatives among the options available, use ethical judgment to select the best alternative, and act consistently to respect the dignity of all affected persons.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- h. This course demonstrates alignment with National Security of the American Republic – to possess the knowledge necessary to protect the fundamental values and core interests of the United States and recognize the broader political context in which military force must be employed.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- i. This course demonstrates alignment with Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens – to persevere despite physical and mental hardships, embrace the oath of office and the profession of arms, adopt the core values, and value all Airmen.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree