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The Culture of Learning Organizations: Understanding Argyris's Theory through a Socio-Cognitive Systems Learning Model

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The Culture of Learning Organizations:
Understanding Argyris’ Theory through a Socio-Cognitive Systems Learning Model

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

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by

Laura Friesenborg

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

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We certify that we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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July 3, 2013
Dedication

My dissertation research is dedicated to Lonnie, Brennan, and Mitchell.

To Mom and Dad.

To John, Eric, and Lisa and your families.

To Grandma Bea.

To Jeanne and Ron.

To Tara.

You each inspire me and have taught me life’s most important lessons.

I count you among my greatest blessings.

To my teachers, from grade school to graduate school,

Who encouraged curiosity and shared their love of learning.

In memory of

My grandparents: Bertram and Madeline, Harvey, and Clara, and

My cousin, J.R.,

Each of whom taught me an abundance about life.

Most especially to my Creator, Lord, and Savior.

“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

Psalm 73:26
Abstract

Organization learning has been included in the strategic plans of many organizations. These organizations typically take a prescriptive approach, seeking to emulate the “best practices” programs of identified learning organizations. Yet, the programming is typically task-oriented, often ignoring the human, socio-cognitive element that is central to the organization. As a result, the root process for how organizations learn remains unclear. Building upon Chris Argyris’ theory and integrating the role of culture and the work of notable authors such as Parker Palmer, Albert Bandura, and Edgar Schein, a socio-cognitive systems learning model was developed to explain organization learning. The model illustrates contrasting socio-cognitive processes: Model I and Model II. Model I is driven by self-oriented values that are veiled by paying lip service to espoused values that reflect cultural ideals. The self-oriented values produce divisive behaviors that result in dysfunctional outcomes, a vicious cycle perpetuated by single-loop learning. In contrast, Model II is driven by wholeness-oriented values, centered upon the desire to understand one’s true self and to understand others. The values shape behaviors and wholeness-oriented outcomes through double-loop learning, promoting transparency by testing assumptions. The Model II process illustrated in the socio-cognitive systems learning model was the focus of this embedded single-case study. The study found that Model I traps had crept into the Model II learning organization, creating growing dissonance that erupted in crisis. Staff members were faced with the choice to succumb to the Model I traps or to pursue productive learning and change through Model II. Recommendations are provided for future research to further test the socio-cognitive systems learning model and explain the culture of learning organizations.
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CHAPTER 1

Human beings are designed for learning (Senge, 2006b, p. 765).

yet most people don’t know how to learn (Argyris, 2006b, p. 267).

What does this paradox mean?

The human brain is innately wired to learn. Humans are created to derive pleasure from learning and to apply that learning as they interact with the world. Parker Palmer (2004) wrote, We arrive in this world undivided, integral, whole. But sooner or later, we erect a wall between our inner and outer lives, trying to protect what is within us or to deceive the people around us (p. 39). And I am sometimes moved to wonder, Whatever became of me? (p. 40).

If humans are born undivided, integral, whole (Palmer, 2004, p. 39), what fractures that wholeness? Palmer (2004) posited, The instinct to protect ourselves by living divided lives emerges when we are young, as we start to see gaps between life’s bright promise and its shadowy realities (p. 14). Recognizing such shadowy realities, W. Edwards Deming wrote, Our prevailing system of management has destroyed our people. People are born with intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, dignity, curiosity to learn, joy in learning. The forces of destruction begin with toddlers a prize for the best Halloween costume, grades in school, gold stars, and on up through the university. On the job, people, teams, divisions are ranked reward for the one at the top, punishment at the bottom. Management by objectives, quotas, incentive pay, business plans, put together separately, division by division, cause further loss, unknown and unknowable (Senge, 2006a, p. xii). Ironically, by focusing on performing for someone else approval, corporations create the very conditions that predestine them to mediocre performance (Senge, 2006b, p. 766).
Compromising organization performance and riddling the organization with hidden costs (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2011), the traditional corporate culture may damage people’s sense of self (Argyris, 2000; Deming, as cited in Senge, 2006a; Palmer, 2004). Individuals build a mindset that they are victims of the system. They are helpless. But in reality we are not helpless (Argyris, 2010, p. 4). To heal, Palmer (2004) wrote, “Only when the pain of our dividedness becomes more clear than we can bear do most of us embark on an inner journey toward living divided no more” (p. 39). On a societal level, healing may come in the form of learning and change among the culture’s institutions (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 2008; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, as cited in Adams & Markus, 2004; Palmer, 2004; Waggoner, 2011).

The good news is that [the organization’s] powerful traps can begin to be changed and reduced during relatively straightforward interventions that emphasize social and cognitive skills (Argyris, 2010, p. 4). Healing on an organization-level requires that people see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (Argyris & Schön, 1996, p. xix). Organization learning and change occur when each worker’s potentialities find room for expression (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 107), when the culture invites wholeness for each person (Palmer, 2004, 2011; Walsh, 2010).

**Approaches to Organization Learning**

Organization learning has been identified as a best practice and has been included in the strategic plans of many organizations. Yet, the system of values, behaviors, and outcomes that create a culture of organization learning remains unclear.
Consistent with dominant Western cultures, American organizations typically approach change efforts using task learning (Habermas, 1984, as cited in Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow, 2000, 2003). Organization learning is typically described by a list of prescriptive criteria that an organization must demonstrate in order to march in-step with best practices organizations. Employee engagement is often found at the top of that list of criteria, as a key performance indicator of organization learning. The books and articles that have explored organization learning and employee engagement, though, have been largely conceptual and idealistic. They describe characteristics of a learning organization but do not explain how to become such an organization using processes grounded in data (Argyris, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

“…Success in the marketplace increasingly depends on learning” (Argyris, 2006b, p. 267). Despite the critical need to learn and change, organizations continue to approach organization learning as an add-on to their work, as a checklist of prescriptive “to do” items (Argyris, 2010). This problem may be partially attributed to the arduous nature of Argyris’s (2000) organization learning theory. Human behavior and the processes used by social systems are highly complex. The conceptual complexity of this theory, coupled with Argyris’s scholarly writing style, make the theory challenging to understand. Adding to the difficulty, organizations are entrenched in the complex social system they are trying to understand, which may create blindness. Organizations may be challenged to understand the organization learning process, much less take steps to change (Edmondson, 1996). A clearer explanation of Argyris’s theory would help organizations learn how to learn and change.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to better understand and explain organization learning by creating a model, diagramming the essence of Argyris’s theory and incorporating the contribution
of other authors (e.g., Bandura, 2002; Palmer, 2004, 2011; Schein, 2004, 2009). While the literature on organization learning and transformational change is substantial, few studies have used a theory building approach that is grounded in data to research the role of culture (Kitayama, Duffy, & Uchida, 2007) or conversation as they relate to organization learning (Ford, 1999). As recommended by Argyris (2000, 2004, 2010) and Ford (1999), this research studied the role of conversation in organization learning. This study also explained the role of culture, as it relates to Argyris’s theory (2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) by examining the culture (i.e., the values, behaviors, and outcomes) of a learning organization. This study predicted that the values, behaviors, and outcomes depicted in the model would be reflected in a learning organization. This was the first study to test that prediction using the socio-cognitive systems learning model.

**Case Study Organization**

The focus of this case study was a learning organization. A learning organization is defined as an organization with the ability to see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (Argyris & Schön, 1996, p. xix).

Operationalizing this definition, this study identified a learning organization as demonstrating the criteria identified by Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008): (a) a supportive learning environment (p. 111), (b) learning opportunities built into work processes, and (c) leadership that models learning.

**Research Question**

The research question guiding this study was: Which patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes are needed for an organization to be a learning organization?
Definitions

Crisis

Crisis is defined as an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending or the turning point for better or worse (Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval). Crisis is derived from the Greek word, krisis, which literally means choice (J. P. Conbere, personal communication, June 18, 2013; Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval).

Culture

Culture is comprised of implicit and explicit (Kitayama et al., 2007) flowing patterns of meaning, flowing bi-directionally between the individual and the social system, such as an organization (Adams & Markus, 2004). Similarly, Schein (2009) described culture as the underlying assumptions generally shared by the social system.

Cultural Mode of Being

Through cultural learning, a community’s flowing patterns of meaning (Adams & Markus, 2004) influence people’s deeply held beliefs or underlying assumptions. The cultural mode of being represents people’s culturally imprinted, underlying assumptions which guide thinking and regulate behavior (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007).

Defensive Reasoning

Defensive reasoning is an irrational approach that is used to protect espoused values. This irrational approach may include distorting information to protect topics considered undiscussable or avoiding conversations that threaten to challenge espoused values. Defensive reasoning is characteristic of Model I thinking and single-loop learning (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).
**Dividedness**

Living a life divided refers to the painful gap between who we most truly are and the role we play in the so-called real world (Palmer, 2004, p. 15). Dividedness is culturally driven (Palmer, 2004, 2011) and is characteristic of the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010).

**Double-Loop Learning**

Double-loop learning serves as the conduit for the Model II socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000). Double-loop learning is the Model II process of analyzing one’s deeply held, underlying assumptions and values after social behaviors occur and after outcomes occur. Analyzing one’s underlying assumptions and values is essential for productive learning and change (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Mezirow, 2003).

**Espoused Values**

Espoused values are values that an individual claims and often believes to be true. However, espoused values are simply ideals. While real values guide behavior, espoused values often contradict individuals’ behavior (Argyris, 2000; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2011; Schein, 2009).

**Fancy Footwork**

Fancy footwork is a defensive routine that deflects blame from oneself, often projecting it onto others. This is a characteristic of the Model I social-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer 2004, 2011).

**Human Agency**

Human agency is defined as the capacity for action in order to shape one’s circumstances and achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 2002).
**Individual agency.** Individual agency is an individual’s personal ability to shape her own life (Bandura, 2002).

**Proxy agency.** Proxy agency is one’s use of others’ influence, expertise, or access to resources to achieve desired results (Bandura, 2002).

**Collective agency.** Collective agency is characterized by a group that works collaboratively to accomplish what they cannot achieve individually (Bandura, 2002).

**In-group**

An in-group is a select group of people whose identity aligns with the group, fostering a sense of elitism about the group and tending to act so as to exclude others (the out-group) (The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, n.d., online retrieval, author’s emphasis).

**Inner Truth**

One’s inner truth is the innate core of pure being (Palmer, 2004, p. 14). Inner truth is also referred to the person’s soul or true self (Palmer, 2004).

**Inquiry**

Inquiry is the process of questioning to uncover underlying assumptions or espoused values in order to lead to more productive action. Inquiry may occur at the individual or organization-level (Argyris & Schöen, 1996). The Ladder of Inference is one tool for guiding inquiry (Argyris, 2000).

**Ladder of Inference**

Inferences are assumptions that are based on probabilities. The Ladder of Inference is a reflection tool developed by Argyris (2000) to help individuals use data to distinguish between fact and assumption.
Learning

Learning means to develop knowledge, understanding, or skill by studying, receiving instruction, observing demonstration, or through experience (Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval).

Learning Models

A learning model is the cyclical process of making action-consequence predictions then acting on them. Through this cyclical process, the learning model either solidifies or challenges the learned theories of action. Argyris and Schön (1996) identified two distinct learning models: single-loop learning and double-loop learning. This study focuses on the double-loop learning model.

Learning Organization

A learning organization is defined as an organization with the ability to see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (Argyris and Schön, 1996, p. xix).

Garvin et al. (2008) operationalized a learning organization as demonstrating: (a) a supportive learning environment (p. 111) that provides psychological safety, appreciation of differences, openness to new ideas, and time for reflection (p. 112), (b) learning opportunities built into the work process, such as experimentation, information collection, analysis, education and training, and information transfer (p. 113), and (c) leadership that seeks to learn by welcoming input and listening.
Learning Paradox

While the process is coined single-loop learning, it is actually a process that inhibits learning and change. As a result, Argyris and Schön (1996) refer to this phenomenon as the learning paradox.

Mental Models

Mental models (Senge, 2006a) are defined as “patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 3). Mental models are also referred to as mental programs (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), theories-in-use (Argyris, 2000; Argyris & Schön, 1996), or by this study as socio-cognitive processes.

Model I Socio-Cognitive Process

Socio-cognitive processes are the “patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 3) related to human interaction. What distinguishes Model I are the inconsistencies between ideas about action and action itself (Argyris, 2000, p. 4).

Based on Argyris’ (2000) theory and his work with Schön (1996), this research theorized that the Model I socio-cognitive process is characterized by: (a) espoused values that contradict real values, (b) unproductive learned social behaviors, and (c) unproductive outcomes that contradict espoused values and resist learning and change.

Model II Socio-Cognitive Process

Socio-cognitive processes are the “patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 3) related to human interaction. What distinguishes Model II is the commitment to transparency and testing of values, social behaviors, and outcomes in order to make decisions using valid information (Argyris, 2000).
Based on Palmer’s (2004, 2011) theory, Argyris’ (2000) theory, and Argyris’ work with Schön (1996), this study theorized that the Model II socio-cognitive process is characterized by: (a) transparent values centered on wholeness, (b) productive, learned social behaviors, and (c) productive outcomes of learning and change, which are consistent with values of wholeness.

**Mutual Constitution**

Mutual constitution is the process by which a social system’s deeply held, underlying assumptions mutually influence and are influenced by individuals’ deeply held, underlying assumptions (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün, Lynn, & Byrne, 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007). This occurs as cultural patterns of meaning flow bi-directionally between the social system and the individual (Adams & Markus, 2004).

**Norms**

Norms are “standards for behavior that exist within a group or category of people” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 21). Norms are generally an implicit system of cultural rules. In contrast, laws are cultural rules made explicit by recording them in writing.

**Organization**

An organization is a social system comprised of people who perform tasks on behalf of a common entity.

**Organization Learning**

Argyris and Schön (1996) defined organization learning as an ability to see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (p. xix).
Out-group


Peace

Peace is defined as "harmony in personal relations" (Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as the individual's confidence in her ability to influence what happens (Bandura, 2002).

Silos

Silos are groups that divide an organization. Each silo is typically characterized by an alliance of people who have an agenda that competes with the agenda held by another silo within the organization (Billett, 2001; Kimball, 2011). Silos are perpetuated by people's failure to engage in dialogue and test assumptions.

Single-Loop Learning

Single-loop learning serves as the conduit for the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000). With single-loop learning, one's deeply held, underlying assumptions and values are hidden, preventing productive learning and change (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). In response to the undesirable outcomes of Model I, individuals strengthen their Model I behaviors in an effort to control the situation and defend themselves. This misguided attempt to change the outcomes, instead, perpetuates the recurring Model I outcomes. In this way, single-loop learning becomes a vicious cycle.
**Socio-Cognitive Process**

Socio-cognitive processes are the "patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 3) related to human interaction. Socio-cognitive processes are also called mental programs (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), mental models (Senge, 2006a), or theories-in-use (Argyris, 2000, 2004; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

**Socio-Cognitive Systems Learning Model**

The socio-cognitive systems learning model is a theory depicting the "patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting" that are related to human interaction. Built upon the work of Argyris (2000, 2004), the theory illustrates the Model I system of values and behaviors, which leads to dysfunctional outcomes. The theory also illustrates the Model II system of values and behaviors, leading to wholeness-related outcomes. Adding to Argyris’ theory, each element of the model depicts the influential role of culture in reinforcing the system (see Figures 3 and 4). This study theorized that learning organizations use the Model II socio-cognitive systems learning process.

**Soul**

The soul is the innate "core of pure being" (Palmer, 2004, p. 14). The soul is also referred to as one’s inner truth or true self (Palmer, 2004).

**Theory-in-Use**

Theories-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1996) are "patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 3). Argyris (2000), along with his colleague, Schön (1996), identified two distinct theories-in-use: Model I and Model II. Theories-in-use are also referred to as mental models (Senge, 2006a), mental programs (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), or by this study as socio-cognitive processes.
Traps

Traps are Model I patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes that make it difficult to produce the learning that is required to generate fundamental change (Argyris, 2010, p. 83). Because Model I is prevalent in the dominant culture, even Model II organizations—learning organizations—are susceptible to Model I traps creeping in from the dominant societal culture.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference or sets of assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change (Mezirow, 2003, p. 58). Transformative learning occurs as individuals use the Model II socio-cognitive process to test their assumptions through using double-loop (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Mezirow, 2000, 2003).

True Self

One’s true self is the innate core of pure being (Palmer, 2004, p. 14). The true self is also referred to as the soul or inner truth (Palmer, 2004).

Trust

Trust is defined as assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone (Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval).

Wholeness

Wholeness is realized by living a life undivided (Palmer, 2004, 2011), when an individual’s role in the real world honors who [she] most truly is (Palmer, 2004, p. 15).
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

History

Organization learning was popularized with the 1990 release of Peter Senge’s bestselling book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. The book’s release resulted in accolades throughout the business community and was heralded by *Harvard Business Review’s* (HBR’s) 75th anniversary issue as one of most influential books in HBR’s history (Seminal Management Books of the Past 75 Years, 1997). However, despite the excitement generated by this book, the topic of organization learning remained largely conceptual. Theories related to organization learning were developed, yet rarely tested (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (1996), seminal authors on the topic of organization learning, noted that individuals in the movement of organization learning were divided into two disparate camps: one driven by organizational practice and the other driven by scholarly research. The camp driven by organizational practice focused on replicating the prescriptive processes of best practices organizations. The prescriptive processes, though, were not tested to determine whether they were, in fact, related to learning across the organization. In contrast, the camp of scholarly researchers did develop and test theories related to organization learning. However, these scholars were separated from the real life experiences faced within organizations. From the perspective of business leaders, the academic theories were not practical or applicable in the day-to-day world of the organization.

Argyris and Schön (1996) described both camps as exhibiting blindness toward the underlying functions that shape organization learning. These functions are the behavioral norms that reinforce, and are
cyclically reinforced by, the organization’s behavior patterns (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007). Today, though learning is espoused by organizations, they typically remain fraught with defensive reasoning and other unhealthy behavior patterns that inhibit learning (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010).

**Socio-Cognitive Processes**

Argyris (2010) found that organization learning and change stem from exposing the patterns of control, defensiveness, and helplessness, and rejecting these unhealthy patterns. To facilitate this change, he used interventions designed to promote new ways of thinking and behaving, as they relate to social interaction. Individuals’ new socio-cognitive skills, on an organization-level, created patterns for healthier, more productive organizations (Argyris, 2010; Marshak & Grant, 2011).

Socio-cognitive processes may be defined as “patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 3). These patterns are shaped collectively by innate human nature and cultural learning, as well as influenced by individual personality. Socio-cognitive processes may also be referred to as mental programs (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), mental models (Senge, 2006a), or theories-in-use (Argyris, 2000; Argyris & Schön, 1996). To build understanding of Argyris’s theory (1998, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010) and its emphasis on social and cognitive skill development, this study referred to such patterns as socio-cognitive processes.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) focused their research on the cultural learning element and its influence on “patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting” (p. 3). They described the development of these patterns as programmed by an individual’s lifetime of experiences. These patterns are heavily influenced by the social systems in which individuals have interacted most throughout
their lifetimes. These social systems include: the immediate family, extended family, school system (including the peers in one’s class, athletic teams, and music groups), neighborhood, network of family friends, online social networks, organizations, and regional, national, and global society. Each of these social systems has a culture.

**Culture**

Culture includes more than traditions, customs, and artifacts. While a culture is expressed through those avenues, culture at its core is much deeper. A culture is a dynamic (Adams & Markus, 2004; Bandura, 2002), shared system of meanings (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 13). Through this system, flowing patterns of implicit and explicit meaning are influenced not only by the people who currently comprise the culture but also by the collective generations who came before them (Bandura, 2002; Bellah et al., 2008; Waggoner, 2011). Patterns of meaning are influenced by prior generations, who manifested the culture as they knew it in the culture’s practices (Adams & Markus, 2004), artifacts (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, in Adams & Markus, 2004; Schein, 2004, 2009), and institutions (Bellah et al., 2008; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, in Adams & Markus, 2004; Waggoner, 2011), aspects of culture that are explicit and observable.

The flowing patterns of meaning (Adams & Markus, 2004) also have implicit aspects, most notably the shared patterns of socio-cognitive processes that are used by people of the culture. Culture influences both the *what* and the *how* of thinking (Oyserman & Lee, 2008, p. 326, authors’ emphasis). That is, culture influences the content of thinking, i.e., the *what* (Oyserman & Lee, 2008), and the shared system of meanings (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). These patterns of meaning (Adams & Markus, 2004) create a lens through which humans interpret their experience and guide their action (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 13).
In this way, culture also influences the process of thinking, i.e., the *how* (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). An individual’s lens shares commonalities with the lenses of other people in the same social system. Through this common social environment, culture is collectively learned and perpetuated as people identify their individual roles within the culture (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Through these flowing patterns of meaning, the social system’s shared meanings and practices influence that of the individual. Similarly, the individual’s meanings and practices also flow toward and influence that of the social system. The bidirectional cultural influence between the individual and the social system is referred to as mutual constitution (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

**Underlying Assumptions**

In their research of culture, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) found that deeply held beliefs or underlying assumptions are housed implicitly at the very core of the culture (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Mezirow, 2003). Underlying assumptions reflect an individual’s worldview, which is comprised of the foundational frameworks that people use to interpret their experiences and understand reality. As Nord (1995, as cited in Glanzer, 2011) asserted, “There is no such thing as uninterpreted experience” (p. 20). All life experiences are interpreted through the lens of one’s worldview, contributing to one’s underlying assumptions. Thus, as worldview is culturally learned, so too are underlying assumptions (Glanzer, 2011; Waggoner, 2011).

Through socialization (Kitayama et al., 2007), the culture’s underlying assumptions are shared (Adams & Markus, 2004; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006), influencing people’s deeply held beliefs or underlying assumptions (Argyris, 2000; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Mezirow, 2003). As the cultural patterns flow within the social system, those patterns generate **‘dynamic**
construction of human psychological experience (Adams & Markus, 2004, p. 354, authors' emphasis). This is the process of cultural learning (Adams & Markus, 2004). Through this process, the culture imprints the individual's underlying assumptions (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Mezirow, 2003), which serve as the foundation for the individual's psychological system for action (Kitayama et al., 2007, p. 138). These underlying assumptions are based on judgments made to make sense of: the environment, rules for thought and behavior (Kitayama et al., 2007), the self, and other people (Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

**The environment.** Culture influences and is influenced by the physical and social environment (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kitayama et al., 2007). Underlying assumptions may stem from the cultural definitions of: evil versus good, dirty versus clean, dangerous versus safe, forbidden versus permitted, decent versus indecent, moral versus immoral, ugly versus beautiful, unnatural versus natural, abnormal versus normal, paradoxical versus logical, irrational versus rational (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 8). Using these assumptions learned from culture, individuals evaluate the world around them. These underlying assumptions identify which aspects of the environment are culturally desired, as well as those aspects of the environment to which the culture is averse. These underlying assumptions about the environment are intricately interwoven with the underlying assumptions about the rules for thought and behavior, as well as deeply held, underlying assumptions about the self and other relevant people (Kitayama et al., 2007).

**Rules for thought and behavior.** Effective participation in human culture typically requires the individual to behave according to a vast set of externally structured, meaningful guidelines, including norms, laws, morals, scripts, traditions, and other rules (Baumeister, Zhang, & Vohs, 2004, p. 113). Such rules are learned through a cyclical two-step process. This
process begins with the individual sensing stimuli, such as language, from the outside world (Aslin & Newport, 2012; Ford, 1999). Second, the individual makes sense of those stimuli by identifying patterns of acceptable behaviors and generalizing those patterns into rules for thought and behavior that may be applied across contexts (Aslin & Newport, 2012; Baumeister et al., 2004; Kolb & Kolb, 2009).

This complex system of rules includes some rules that are implicit and some that are explicit. As the cultural patterns of meaning flow (Adams & Markus, 2004), cultural rules influence the individual’s deeply held, underlying assumptions, while the underlying assumptions mutually influence cultural rules (Adams & Markus, 2004; Bandura, 2002; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007) in a dynamic interchange between the individual and the environment (Bandura, 2002; Kolb & Kolb, 2009).

Humans are designed to live culturally (Adams & Markus, 2004; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kitayama et al., 2007). They have an innate ability to regulate behavior, as well as adapt their behavior to the complex system of social rules (Aslin & Newport, 2012; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). However, learning this complex system of social rules is no simple task. Complex social rules are challenging to navigate, particularly as individuals encounter new social contexts (Baumeister et al., 2004). Human agency, the capacity for action in order to shape one’s circumstances and achieve desired outcomes, is one way to describe how people navigate social rules (Bandura, 2002).

**Human agency.** Human agency is affected by the deeply held, underlying assumptions that guide thinking and regulate behavior (Bandura 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007). Through cultural learning about the rules about thought and behavior, people pursue order and constancy in their environment. This system of behavioral regulation links cultural meaning to human
thought and action (Quinn & Holland, 1995), a phenomenon referred to as the cultural mode of being (Kitayama et al., 2007). The cultural mode of being is an integral part of a larger collective process by which culture is created, preserved, and changed (p. 139). As a culture’s patterns of meaning flow, bidirectional influence occurs between the social system and the individual, mutually influencing each other (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

**Multiple layers of culture.** Underlying assumptions are threaded throughout the culture. However, not all individuals within the same national or regional culture hold identical sets of underlying assumptions. While they tend to have some underlying assumptions in common, variances may occur, perhaps due in part to influences from the patterns of meaning of multiple layers of culture. In addition to national culture, a culture’s multiple layers may include: national culture; regional, ethnic, religious, or language affiliation; gender; generation; social class; and organization. These layers may or may not hold different underlying assumptions from the dominant, national culture. While between-group differences may exist among the layers of culture (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), within-group differences are also prevalent (Glanzer, 2011).

Commonalities exist among the underlying assumptions of people who share the top layer of culture, the national level. For example, on a macro-level, the American culture has a rule-based structure, espousing that all people should be treated according to the rules (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). However, the distinct layers of culture identified by Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) influence the deeply held, underlying assumptions amongst individuals who affiliate with a particular group within that layer of culture. For example, a CEO...
and an individual contributor at the same organization may have different deeply held, underlying assumptions, particularly if they are members of disparate social classes.

The social rules held by people within the distinct layers of culture may vary (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Furthermore, the dominant culture may target smaller subcultures with distinct social rules. For example, critical theorists argue that people of the wealthy dominant culture maintain their dominant status by imposing hegemonic social rules that target and oppress the people of subcultures (Brookfield, 2005; Fromm, 1994).

**Affordances and constraints.** Perhaps derived from an individual’s status within the multiple layers of culture (Brookfield, 2005; Fromm, 1994), each individual’s mode of being is both constantly afforded and constrained by behaviors, expectations, or evaluations of others (Kitayama et al., 2007, p. 138). Individuals interpret those affordances, constraints, expectations, and judgments using their deeply held, underlying assumptions about how people should think and behave (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). These underlying assumptions represent the culture’s flowing patterns of meaning, patterns which create rules for thought and behavior through a complex system of shared social norms (Kitayama et al., 2007). Social norms are tightly woven into the culture, serving to maintain order and constancy within the culture. Order and constancy (Fromm, 1994; Quinn & Holland, 1995) are further reinforced through the culture’s artifacts and institutions (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, in Adams & Markus, 2004; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998; Waggoner, 2011).

Such institutions include organizations. People tend to be attracted to organizations that have clear, consistent identities, rather than organizations whose identifies are more scattered or ambiguous. People seek organizations that have the same framework of prescribed behavioral rules to which they are accustomed. In seeking familiar social rules, individuals gravitate toward
homogeneous organizations that enable the individual to be folded into the fabric of its homogeneity (Bryant, 2011).

Underlying assumptions about the environment and rules for thought and behavior are intricately intertwined with underlying assumptions about the self and other people (Bandura, 2002; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007). For example, a culture's flowing patterns of meaning about beauty and the desirability of such beauty may influence self-concept, the way individuals judge others, the underlying assumptions that regulate clothing choices, and perhaps the environments where individuals choose to insert themselves. Individuals' deeply held, underlying assumptions are related to the cultural environment and its rules about thought and behavior, but they are also projected onto the self and other people (Bandura, 2002; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007).

The self. Deeply held beliefs are generally learned subconsciously, beginning in early childhood (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). Individuals affiliate with certain groups within social categories (Oyserman & Lee, 2008) or layers of culture, such as national culture; regional, ethnic, religious, or language affiliation; gender; generation; social class; or organization (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). This affiliation is based upon how closely the individual identifies the self with the social group (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Oyserman & Lee, 2008). In this way, culture shapes an individual's social identity (Oyserman & Lee, 2008).

Self-evaluation. Through affiliation with social groups amongst the layers of culture, individuals evaluate themselves, based upon the assumptions learned from the cultural groups with which they identify. This self-evaluation is based on the affiliate culture's assessment of individuals' desirability. Individuals compare themselves with culturally derived meanings about what is beautiful, what is normal, and what is good (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Self-concept is
related to individuals’ perception of how closely their attributes match what the culture defines as desirable (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kitayama et al., 2007).

In addition to self-evaluation of personal traits, individuals evaluate their thoughts and behavior according to the cultural norms which dictate rules for thought and behavior. Individuals compare their thoughts and behaviors with the culturally derived standards for what is considered “forbidden versus permitted” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 8). In this way, individuals assess whether they are “dangerous versus safe, decent versus indecent, moral versus immoral, abnormal versus normal, paradoxical versus logical, irrational versus rational” (p. 8).

_Locus of control._ The perceptions surrounding thought and behavior, particularly as they relate to the self, may be skewed. Underlying assumptions about the causality of circumstances are influenced by locus of control. In the American culture, people have a tendency to attribute negative circumstances that affect the self to external factors. In contrast, they have a tendency to attribute negative circumstances that affect other people as caused by others’ internal qualities (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

_Human agency._ Through the American culture’s lens of individualism (Bandura, 2002; Bellah et al., 2008; Kitayama et al., 2007; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Waggoner, 2011), the modes of human agency are culturally learned. People use these modes of agency in order to attempt to influence their life circumstances, to seek control over what happens to them. Bandura (2002) identified three modes of human agency in his Social Cognitive Theory: (a) individual agency, (b) proxy agency, and (c) collective agency. All three modes are used in concert to attempt to assert control over one’s life. Individual agency relates to underlying assumptions about the self, while proxy and collective agencies relate to underlying assumptions about other people and
their relationship to the self. All three modes of agency are significantly influenced by self-efficacy, individuals’ confidence in their ability to influence what happens. “Self-efficacy beliefs regulate human functioning through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes” (p. 270).

In the individualistic, American culture (Bandura, 2002; Bellah et al., 2008; Kitayama et al., 2007; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Waggoner, 2011), Bandura (2002) found that managers achieved the highest degrees of self-efficacy and organization productivity when they employed individual agency. Through individual agency, managers crafted their actions in a strategic attempt to control their circumstances. Despite this finding for the overall culture, within-culture differences were also evident. Individualism manifests differently in different regions of the U.S. In addition, while the American culture is predominantly individualistic, people within the culture have varying positions on the individualism-collectivism continuum. Bandura acknowledged that Americans who have a more collectivist orientation tend to excel to a greater degree when employing a collective agency. People employ all three modes of agency, although they tend to exhibit preferred modes depending on the context. For example, individuals may employ individual agency in an academic or work environment, yet employ collective agency with their families.

**Other people.** An individual’s underlying assumptions about another person reflect one’s assumptions about that person’s attributes, thoughts, and behaviors within the framework of cultural norms. In this way, the culture influences the underlying assumptions that individuals have about others. The individualistic self evaluates others in terms of their capacity to increase one’s capacity to control her circumstances and achieve desired results through (a) proxy or (b) collective agency (Bandura, 2002).
With proxy agency, individuals have deeply held, underlying assumptions that they can capitalize on the resources, expertise, power, or influence of others. The individuals believe that by aligning with a more powerful person, they will enjoy power by proxy (Bandura, 2002). This is related to the assumption that people may increase their social capital by associating with others who hold high degrees of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Belliveau, O'Reilly, & Wade, 1996). Proxy stems from association, by strategically positioning oneself with powerful others (Bandura, 2002).

Different from proxy agency, collective agency is the capacity to control one’s circumstances through a collective effort. In the dominant collectivist culture of Hong Kong (Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007; Oyserman & Lee, 2008), managers achieved the highest degrees of self-efficacy and organization productivity when they employed collective agency. However, like all modes of agency, collective agency is thought to be present in some form in virtually all cultures. While the dominant American culture has strong tendencies toward individualism, all Americans are predicted to employ collective agency to some degree in some contexts. In addition, due to within-group differences, some individuals within the American culture may have a natural orientation toward collectivism, more so than individualism. Subsequently, Bandura (2002) found that Americans with a collectivist orientation achieved higher degrees of self-efficacy and organization productivity through collective agency, rather than individual agency.

Connection to Social Cognition

While Argyris (2000, 2004) research does not specifically examine the bidirectional influence between culture and an individual’s underlying assumptions, he and Schön (1996) did elude to the role of cultural learning, stating, “Individuals are programmed with Model I
theories-in-use (p. 106). An individual’s socio-cognitive patterns mix with the socio-cognitive patterns of the social system (Adams & Markus, 2004; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007) as they flow culturally between the social system and individual (Adams & Markus, 2004).

Understanding the role of acculturation is essential for understanding one’s underlying assumptions (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Oyserman & Lee, 2008).

Values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes comprise a cognitive process that guides social interaction. Such socio-cognitive processes are also referred to as mental programs (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) or mental models (Senge, 2006a). The bidirectional, cultural interchange between the underlying assumptions of the individual and the social system (Adams & Markus, 2004; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007) influences each element of the socio-cognitive process.

**Model I Socio-Cognitive Process: The Cultural Default**

The Model I socio-cognitive process is a thought-behavior pattern identified by Argyris (2000) and his colleague Schön (1996). This thought-behavior pattern driven by untested, underlying assumptions shapes Model I values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes. While Argyris (2000) posited that values inform beliefs, Schein (2009) described deeply held beliefs and values as bidirectionally influencing each other.

A meta-analysis of the influence of culture on cognition concluded that cognitive processes are primed by culture (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). This finding, coupled with the posit by Conbere and Heorhiadi (2006) and Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) that cultural learning begins at a young age, suggests that the Model I process is subconsciously learned through acculturation, rather than consciously learned (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Based on this research, the Model I socio-cognitive process may be deduced as the American cultural default process for social

**Model I: Values**

The Model I socio-cognitive process includes thought-behavior patterns characterized by a dance of deception and contradiction (Argyris, 2000, 2004; Palmer, 2011). Such a dance is evident not only in self-other exchanges but also internally within oneself (Palmer, 2004) through the contradiction between one’s real values and the values that are espoused (Argyris, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2011; Schein, 2009). People learn values from others in the social systems to which they belong. They also learn the elaborate system of social norms designed to perpetuate those values by observing the behaviors modeled by others in the social system (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). In cultures where the Model I socio-cognitive process is prevalent, the intricate dance between real values and espoused values is also learned (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006).

**Real values.** In the dominant American culture, which is highly individualistic, one’s real values reflect cultural individualism (Bellah et al., 2008; Kitayama et al., 2007; Waggoner, 2011). The worth of the individual self [is] fundamental to the ethos of the American way of life (Waggoner, 2011, p. 7). Contradictory to one’s espoused values, the individual’s primary real value is the self. In order to live within this contradiction, this value is held subconsciously, under the veil of espoused values. To serve the self, individuals value people and things that advance their desires and goals (Bandura, 2002; Bellah et al., 2008; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007). People’s hearts are gripped by their egocentric values: their egocentric desires and goals (Bellah et al., 2008). These values may produce greed and an indifference to the suffering of others (Palmer, 2004, p. 1).
The individualism of the American culture influences the value of self. Evidence of individualistic values can be found on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. These media are designed for individuals to post personal anecdotes, under the premise that the world is interested in the individual’s thoughts and experiences. The widespread use of social media has strengthened the trend toward "hyperindividualism" (Waggoner, 2011, p. 14).

How would a social system effectively operate if cultural norms promoted the open admission that one’s primary value was oneself, supplemented by her egocentric desires and goals for power and pleasure? Would members come together to benefit cooperatively from collective agency? Would members of the social system have the capacity to uphold a common set of social rules for thought and behavior, or would there be anarchy? Perhaps as a built-in mechanism to avoid social chaos and to provide order (Quinn & Holland, 1995), the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b) is marked by espoused values that cloak the real, egocentric values (Kitayama et al., 2007; Schein, 2009), which are individualistic in nature (Bellah et al., 2008; Kitayama et al., 2007; Waggoner, 2011).

**Espoused values.** With the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b), the individual’s real values are centered on the desires and goals of the self (Kitayama et al., 2007). These desires and goals are hidden in the subconscious (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), shrouded by espoused values (Schein, 2009). Espoused values are expressed by individuals or social systems to reflect the values that are expressed by the cultures with which they most closely identify. These are called espoused values because they are claimed as true and even believed to be true by the individual claiming them although the behavior of the individual or social system is not necessarily congruent with the values that are espoused (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Schein, 2009). With the Model I socio-cognitive process, an individual’s
espoused values and actual behaviors often conflict (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006), yet the individual is skillfully unaware of this contradiction (Argyris, 2000; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2011).

The cultural ideals (Kitayama et al., 2007) that people typically espouse as values (Schein, 2009) do not reflect their real, egocentric values (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007), so it is no wonder that people have false underlying assumptions about each other and the beliefs and values held by one another. Referred to as pluralistic ignorance (Adams & Markus, 2004), erroneous underlying assumptions about other people’s beliefs and values stem from the failure to test those assumptions for validity. Instead, these assumptions about other people’s beliefs and values remain mere assumptions but are held as truths (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Palmer, 2011).

In interpreting people’s statements about their values, it is important to distinguish between the desirable and the desired: how people think the world ought to be versus what people want for themselves (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 21, authors’ emphasis). While individuals’ values revolve around the desires and goals of the self (i.e., the desired), the individuals expect others’ real values to equate to the ideology of their espoused values (i.e., the desirable). As a result, a paradox exists between individuals’ values and their expectations regarding others’ values (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Openness, honesty, and integrity are espoused values that contradict the Model I behaviors that are driven by real values (Argyris, 2010), which center on individualistic desires and goals (Kitayama et al., 2007).

Empowerment (Argyris, 1998; Ford, 1999) and employee engagement (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008) are also examples of this paradox (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Commonly held, misguided substitutes for organization learning, such as empowerment (Argyris, 1998;
Ford, 1999) and employee engagement (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008), are espoused values that shroud management’s real values (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Schein, 2009) of power and control (Argyris, 1998; Brookfield, 2000, 2005; Fromm, 1994).

**Empowerment values.** The American culture espouses values related to "empowering individual expression" (Waggoner, 2011, p. 7). In fact, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution empowers the guarantee of free speech (United States Congress, 1789), a value that is highly espoused by the culture. However, while this value is claimed, it is not always real. Such individual expression is welcome if it supports the espoused values of the dominant culture, but criticism or hostility may be expected if the individual's message contradicts the espoused values of the dominant culture (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Waggoner, 2011).

In an article entitled "Empowerment: The Emperor's New Clothes," Argyris (1998) exposed the disparity between espoused values about empowerment versus real values. Typical organizations in the dominant American culture espouse the value of empowerment, but their behaviors contradict those claims, suggesting disparate real values hiding beneath the cloak of espoused empowerment. Argyris wrote, "The change programs and practices we employ are full of inner contradictions that cripple innovation, motivation, and drive. At the same time, CEOs subtly undermine empowerment. Managers love empowerment in theory, but the command-and-control model is what they trust and know best" (p. 98).

While managers exhibit skilled unawareness of this contradiction, mixed messages make the contradiction glaringly obvious to employees. Employees are cynical of managers' claims to empower them (Ford, 1999), which may lead to mistrust. The disparity between espoused and real values is not limited to managers. Employees also demonstrate a contradiction between espoused and real values related to the issue of empowerment. Employees espouse the value of
empowerment, yet they may avoid real opportunities for empowerment when those opportunities also require accountability. Both managers and employees likely have mixed feelings about the issue of empowerment (Argyris, 1998).

**Employee engagement values.** Yesterday’s empowerment initiatives have been repackaged and are sold as today’s employee engagement initiatives. Employee engagement initiatives, while well-meaning, are merely recycled versions of employee empowerment (Argyris, 1998). Employee engagement has been widely studied (Kimball, 2011). In the bulk of the literature, the process for achieving employee engagement reads like a series of prescriptive items on a check-off list (Argyris, 2010). Such items might include: identifying engagement drivers specific to the organization, creating a culture that recognizes engaged employees, fostering diversity and inclusion, and building employee trust in the organization’s leaders (“Ten Ways to Maximize Employee Engagement,” 2009). However, do these items on the check-off list reflect the organization’s real values? Or do these strategies simply reflect espoused values? Might employee engagement, in itself, be an espoused value?

The existing literature does not address these questions. Employee engagement has largely been explored conceptually, rather than grounded in data. Few studies have examined the role of conversation as it relates to employee engagement (Ford, 1999; Kimball, 2011; van der Merwe, Chermack, Kulikowich, & Yang, 2007). Of the existing, empirically based literature, most studies measured employee engagement using self-reported, quantitative surveys as the sole source of data. This research design poses a validity problem. When quantitative data is used exclusively, the culture can be studied only superficially (Argyris, 2010; Schein, 2009) because quantitative questionnaires cannot measure the deeply held, underlying assumptions that define the essence of cultures (Schein, 2009, p. 206). Furthermore, “The patterning of cultural
assumptions into a paradigm cannot be revealed by a questionnaire (p. 206, author's emphasis). As a result, the quantitative questionnaire may be neither reliable nor valid, because to validate formal measures of something as deep and complex as cultural assumptions is intrinsically very difficult (p. 206). Statistical validity is incapable of untangling espoused values from real values (Argyris, 2006b; Schein, 2009).

**Real versus espoused values.** Why do people espouse the values of the dominant culture rather than claiming their real values? Disguising real values with a cloak of espoused values (Palmer, 2004; Schein, 2009) is culturally learned. This process was learned so early in life that it is now taken for granted (Argyris, 2006b; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Mezirow, 2003). Espoused values stem from the people in power within the dominant culture. People who do not hold power within a culture tend to adopt the espoused values of those in power (Kitayama et al., 2007). If individuals realize that their deeply held, underlying assumptions and behaviors contrast with that of those in power within the dominant culture, they tend to experience anxiety (Bryant, 2011; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). Perhaps individuals adopt the espoused values of the dominant culture as a method to avoid dissonance between themselves and those in power (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007).

With widespread acculturation of deeply held, underlying assumptions and general agreement about espoused values, what is so problematic about the Model I socio-cognitive process? Because they were acquired so early in our lives, many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore they cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by outsiders. They can only be inferred from the way people act (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 10). While the culture generally agrees on its espoused values, conflict arises when the way others act contradicts the values they espouse. Rather than reflecting the values they claim,
individuals’ behaviors reflect their real values, which are held in the subconscious (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The contradiction between real and espoused values is problematic, as evidenced in the learned social behaviors that are prevalent in the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006).

**Model I: Learned Social Behaviors**

The Model I socio-cognitive process makes the mistake of using instrumental learning strategies, rather than communicative learning strategies, for social interaction. Instrumental and communicative learning constitute the two major domains of learning, each having its own purpose, logic of inquiry, criteria of rationality, and mode of validating beliefs (Habermas, 1984, as cited in Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). Instrumental learning is designed to fix a problem by controlling either the elements perceived as causing the problem or the elements perceived as providing the solution (Bullard, 2011; Gudynas, 2011; Walsh, 2010). The instrumental learning approach is appropriate for controlled, object-oriented tasks such as accounting, computer programming, and operating machinery. In contrast, communicative learning is designed for developing common understanding among people and is essential for building relationships and solving interpersonal problems (see Table 1). While instrumental learning changes what we know, communicative learning changes how we know (Mezirow, 2000, 2003).

In Western cultures, instrumental learning is the predominant approach. The problem is that instrumental learning is applied not only to object-related tasks but also to people-related contexts, such as management, for which instrumental learning is not well-suited. For people-related contexts, communicative learning is the appropriate approach because seeking to control people is generally not the most effective approach for eliciting productivity and innovation.
(Gudynas, 2011; Habermas, 1984, as cited in Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow, 2000, 2003; Walsh, 2010).

Table 1

*Differences between Instrumental Learning and Communicative Learning*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Instrumental learning</th>
<th>Communicative learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Task performance</td>
<td>Shared understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
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<td>Interpersonal approach</td>
<td>Control and influence others</td>
<td>Listen and learn the meaning of others’ words</td>
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<td>Commitment</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Internal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utility</td>
<td>Technical and emotionally neutral procedures</td>
<td>Collaboration and resolution of relationship problems</td>
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“Already too much human imagination is channeled into ‘solving’ problems the wrong way. What we lack is the imagination to think about how to live differently, how to unravel the power structures that obstruct change, and how to rethink ‘development’ (Bullard, 2011, p. 142). The Model I socio-cognitive process and, in particular, the cultural approach for applying instrumental learning to people-related contexts in organization management, is one such power structure that obstructs change. Leading change to a communicative learning approach requires a new way of thinking (Habermas, 1984, as cited in Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow, 2000, 2003).
Unilateral control. In the dominant American culture, most businesses approach organization learning much the same way they approach instrumental learning (Argyris, 2004; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Mezirow, 2000, 2003). Dominant voices emphasize control and influence to generate external commitment (Mezirow, 2000, 2003; Palmer, 2004; Walsh, 2010), through strategies such as empowerment or employee engagement (Argyris, 1998; Ford, 1999; Kimball, 2011; van der Merwe et al., 2007). In this way, instrumental learning supports the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b). When people apply instrumental learning to tasks, they tend to test their assumptions throughout the process. However, when businesses approach organization learning and social interaction by applying instrumental learning techniques, they fail to test their underlying assumptions (Argyris, 2006b).

Prescribed practices. Corporate America develops organization learning processes just as it approaches instrumental-type strategies, by researching best practices. Businesses pinpoint other businesses recognized as “learning organizations” and obtain their prescribed list of best practices that, if followed, are presumed to result in organization learning. The organization then attempts to replicate that prescription and uses metrics to measure its success in adopting it (Argyris, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004). While this camp has moved toward the use of metrics to assess the organization’s success at prescriptive practices, the validity of the prescriptive practices remains largely untested (Argyris, 2006b, 2010).

Such prescribed practices for organization learning include: ŕempowering others to act on the vision (Kotter, 2006, p. 243) and ŕplanning for and creating short-term wins, ŕ [rewarding] the people involved with recognition, promotions, and even money (p. 248). Argyris (1998, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010) would disagree that prescriptive best practices, such as these, that are controlled by management would be effective in producing organization learning and change. An
organization is a unique social system with complex, underlying cultural norms and behavior patterns. Simply covering the organization with a prescribed "learning organization" dressing does not change the organization's untested, underlying assumptions, which guide all interaction within the social system.

Prescriptive practices are based on instrumental learning (Argyris, 2010; Mezirow, 2000, 2003). Prescribed practices such as empowerment and employee engagement use culturally learned social strategies to control people and circumstances (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2010; Bandura, 2002; Ford, 1999; Palmer 2004). While external motivation strategies, such as offering promotions and monetary bonuses, do appeal to employees' real values of individualistic desires and goals (Kitayama et al., 2007), such external motivation strategies produce only external commitment, not the expected outcome of internal commitment (Argyris, 1998, 2010; Bandura, 2002).

Empowerment and employee engagement. Learned social behaviors are designed for realizing individuals' real values. The values, in turn, are informed by culturally influenced, underlying assumptions. Those deeply held assumptions and individualistic values are self-serving. The ego thrives on power and status, and a manager's egocentric desires and goals (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007) may be threatened by change. Change may also be avoided, for fear of embarrassment if efforts for learning and change are not successful (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010).

True organization learning exposes the organization to change (Argyris, 2004; Billett, 2001; Ford, 1999; Kimball, 2011). The potential for learning competes with the stability-seeking mechanisms of the organization culture (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). While managers may espouse learning and change, their behaviors are control-seeking. Seeking unilateral control is a
hallmark, anti-learning strategy that is designed to perpetuate the Model I socio-cognitive process within the organization (Argyris, 1998, 2000). Similarly, employees react by seeking unilateral control, perhaps by expending only minimal effort or by disengaging completely. Employees and managers recognize each other's role in the social game (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), which projects espoused values but is rife with contradictory behaviors (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). Yet, they are blind (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004; Carlson, 2013; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006) to their own role in the social game (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Employers espouse that they want to empower employees (Argyris, 1998), yet they shut them out of all decision-making. Efforts for "employee engagement" (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008) are attempts to use incentives and rewards with the expectation that these external motivators will produce internal motivation among employees. Through this process, managers attempt to use their individual agency to try to produce collective agency among employees, while management intends to retain individual agency, with no plans to join employees in a true collective focus. Collective agency will not be successful unless people consider leadership to be sincere and trustworthy in their espoused desires to make decisions and work collectively, with managers and employees side-by-side (Argyris, 1998; Bandura, 2002; Ford, 1999).

Employees in organizations with command-and-control cultures are not fooled (Argyris, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Ford, 1999). They recognize that employee engagement campaigns (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008) merely espouse to change the culture toward collective decision-making and collective work toward identifying and achieving organization goals. Employees realize that, regardless of the level of effort they invest, they have no power to have a voice or play a valuable role in bettering the organization (Argyris, 1998; Bandura, 2002;
Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). As a result, individuals in command-and-control organization cultures dissociate their personal identities from their roles at work. That is why employee engagement efforts will never work, as long as the talk about co-creating an organization culture built upon collective efforts among leaders and individual contributors is only espoused and not real (Argyris, 1998). Employees will not acquire self-efficacy in this way (Bandura, 2002).

While managers’ skilled unawareness prevents them from seeing that empowerment (Argyris, 1998; Ford, 1999) and employee engagement (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008) are espoused values (Schein, 2009) sabotaged by anti-learning tactics (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004), employees are not fooled (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). In response to this social game (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) masked as an organization learning strategy (Argyris, 2006a), employees generally make one of two choices. They either disengage (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Palmer, 2004), or they develop strategies for career advancement (Adler & Kwon, 2002), where they may fulfill their individualistic desires and goals (Kitayama et al., 2007) to join the power elite (Argyris, 2000, 2004). Management is not the only party operating under the Model I socio-cognitive process. Employees are too. The choice to disengage and the choice to implement tactics to achieve management status are both learned social strategies, characteristic of Model I (Argyris, 2000).

**Disengagement.** If management views workers not as valuable, unique individuals but as tools to be discarded when no longer needed, then employees will also regard the firm as nothing more than a machine for issuing paychecks, with no other value or meaning. Under such conditions it is difficult to do a good job, let alone to enjoy one’s work. But as Lincoln said, most people cannot be fooled for long, and few people will keep investing their psychic energy into an organization that despises them (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 101).
Americans spend the majority of their waking hours at work. Their careers may provide more than just an income. Careers may also provide them with a sense of identity (Bandura, 2002). However, if they find the work to be demeaning, as relegated simply to following orders (Argyris, 1998), the employee may disengage (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Palmer, 2004). Because the demeaning work serves as a reminder of the painful gap between who [they] truly are and the role [they] play in the so-called real world (Palmer, 2004, p. 15), employees in command-and-control organization cultures tend to separate one's personal identity from the work role.

Without trust in their leadership and confidence that they can accomplish the desired changes through collective effort (Bandura, 2002), employees tend to avoid participating in the organization's prescribed strategies. They will go through the motions to collect a paycheck but they will not be fully dedicated to the goals of the organization because they do not believe they have a valued role in the collective effort to identify and work toward achieving those goals. In fact, there may be no collective effort at all. In the case of most organizations, managers identify goals and prescribe the steps to achieve the goal. The employee is cast from all decision-making processes and has no role except to follow orders (Argyris, 1998). As a result, employees do not have confidence that they can better the future of the organization or better their own future, for that matter (Bandura, 2002). This, in turn, leads employees to disengage (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Palmer, 2004).

Any espoused efforts on the part of managers to engage or empower employees will be futile (Argyris, 1998). Employees see this effort for what it really is: a social game (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), masking itself as a bona fide initiative to achieve management's espoused values related to collective learning on an organization level (Argyris, 2006a).
**Obsess to succeed.** While some employees may respond to this social game (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) by disengaging (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Palmer, 2004), others may obsess to succeed. They may strive toward management status in order to enjoy the same power and control that they observe among managers (Argyris, 2000; Palmer, 2004). Managers may exert power (Brookfield, 2005) by capitalizing on the desire among employees to rise to management status by creating an organization culture that requires long hours and a frenzied pace in order to achieve recognition and advancement (Palmer, 2004).

Societies often succeed in developing systems of meaning that rationalize and justify even the hardest labor. A saying from the Middle Ages ran: ‘Peeling potatoes is as important as building cathedrals, if done for the greater glory of God’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 96). This rationalization and justification of ‘hard labor’ is still prevalent today and is particularly evident in the American culture (Palmer, 2004).

Using the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b), management may ‘dangle the carrot’ of career advancement by appealing to employees’ real values, their individualistic desires and goals (Kitayama et al., 2007), with the stipulation that such advancement requires long hours and a frenzied pace (Palmer, 2004). Such expectations are embedded into both the dominant culture of corporate America and the deeply held, underlying assumptions of many corporate employees seeking career advancement (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2004). In this way, culture appeals to the value of individualistic desires and goals (Kitayama et al., 2007), whereby reinforcing the learned strategy for seeking unilateral control (Argyris, 2000).

In response, employees may develop an obsession to succeed, which may manifest as workaholism. In the process, they lose touch with [their] souls and disappear into [their] roles.
This form of dividedness negatively impacts their families and others around them. In addition, their contributions to those they serve also suffer as the workaholism takes a toll on the health of one’s inner self and on the health of the individual’s close relationships (Palmer, 2004).

Social capital. Culture also reinforces the learned social strategy of accumulating social capital (Kitayama et al., 2007), a behavior that is characteristic of the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000). Social capital is defined as “an individual’s personal network and elite institutional affiliations” (Belliveau et al., 1996, p. 1572). Accumulation of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Belliveau et al., 1996) is a learned social strategy that is characteristic of the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000). The individual values relationships with others based on the value of their social capital. Social others are important only to the extent that they are seen as instrumental in achieving one’s own goals and desires (Kitayama et al., 2007, p. 143). The social system is comprised of competing individuals (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Palmer, 2004), each striving to achieve egocentric goals and desires (Kitayama et al., 2007), each striving to win (Argyris, 2000). Carlson and Apple (as cited in Glanzer, 2011) explained, “We are not necessarily playing on a level field in terms of whose voices circulate more widely, whose voices are heard, and whose voices dominate. This is a knotty problem that cannot be wished away” (p. 31).

People are motivated to build social capital in order to increase their proxy agency, their capacity to control life’s circumstances by capitalizing on others’ expertise, influence, or access to resources (Bandura, 2002). They benefit from proxy agency through increased social influence (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Belliveau et al., 1996) and sometimes even financial compensation (Belliveau et al., 1996). While proxy agency is not inherently bad (Bandura, 2002), striving to
build social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Belliveau et al., 1996) may lead the individual to abandon or contradict one’s deeply held beliefs through self-censorship (Argyris, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). Illustrating this point, Palmer (2004) wrote, “When our impulse to side with the weak is thwarted by threats of lost social standing, it is because we value popularity [to the extent that we are willing to risk] being a pariah” (p. 34).

**Gossip.** One method for accumulating social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Belliveau et al., 1996) is through gossip, a common form of social communication that produces cultural learning. Gossip is characterized as second-hand anecdotes (Baumeister et al., 2004), which are interpreted through the lens of one’s deeply held, underlying assumptions (Argyris, 2000; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Despite being based only on assumptions or hearsay, gossip is generally not intended to be tested for validity. Instead, it is often assumed as truth (Argyris, 2000, 2004). The anecdotal circumstances surrounding the subject of the gossip are generally attributed to the character of the person who experienced them, rather than to external factors or context. The nature of gossip often reflects negatively on another person. The popular view among psychologists is that the gossipers may be motivated by a malicious intent to harm the target of the gossip and damage that person’s reputation, although Baumeister, Zhang, and Vohs (2004) posit that this intent may be secondary.

The primary motivations for individuals (i.e., tellers) to gossip may be to share neutral information about how to avoid violating social rules or to develop a social bond with other individuals (i.e., hearers). Gossip is used as a means to entice hearers toward a mutual interest in developing that bond. At the deepest level, the motivation for gossip may be to develop this social bond (Baumeister et al., 2004) in order to develop proxy agency (Bandura, 2002), with tellers seeking to benefit from the social capital of hearers (Adler & Kwon,
\(\text{Teller}\)s may also use gossip to demonstrate their understanding of social rules or to demonstrate power by exerting social control, establishing themselves as someone not to be crossed (Baumeister et al., 2004).

\(\text{Hearer}\)s may be enticed simply by a curiosity to learn social rules in order to better navigate the opportunities and constraints of the social environment. Gossip tends to stimulate such curiosity because it revolves around learning from the norm violations and the negative consequences experienced by other individuals. Negative experiences tend to draw a stronger reaction than positive experiences. Similarly, people tend to be more attracted to sharing or listening to negative circumstances, rather than positive experiences, experienced by the target of the gossip. \(\text{Hearer}\)s may participate in gossip as a strategy to learn and avoid such pain or negative consequences, or they may have more malicious motives, such as harming the target individual through defamation and other forms of indirect aggression (Baumeister et al., 2004).

\(\text{Hearer}\)s may also be motivated by proxy agency (Bandura, 2002), through a mutual interest in developing a social bond with \(\text{Teller}\)s. Regardless of the motivation, both the \(\text{Teller}\)s and \(\text{Hearer}\)s deepen their understanding of the complex system of social rules by discussing the target individual's norm violations and the consequences of such behavior, learning from the mistakes or misfortunes of another (Baumeister et al., 2004).

Baumeister, Zhang, and Vohs (2004) described gossip more broadly, as learning that derives from the second-hand experiences of other individuals. They found that positive outcomes do result from non-malicious gossip, citing vicarious learning of the culture's social rules as an important benefit of gossip. However, the nature of this learning presents some problems. First, the nature of what is learned is not necessarily validated through testing (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010). Gossip is second-hand or third-hand information (Baumeister et
al., 2004). To make sense of this information, the individual draws conclusions using deeply held, underlying assumptions (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), leaving the underlying assumptions unchecked (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006).

A culturally learned, thinking pattern is established. Through this pattern, deeply held, underlying assumptions guide decision-making about thoughts and behaviors, yet individuals do not scrutinize those assumptions as part of the thought process. This process is a hallmark of the Model I socio-cognitive process. As the pattern becomes more and more established, individuals not only leave the assumptions unchecked but also shield those assumptions from being challenged by other people. Individuals use other learned social strategies, such as defensive reasoning or fancy footwork, to protect their underlying assumptions at all costs (Argyris, 2000; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). On a cultural level, social rules are strengthened when members of the culture follow those rules without questioning or challenging them (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Baumeister et al., 2004).

**Defense of self and espoused values.** With the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996), social exchanges are often nonproductive, largely due to defensive reasoning (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Palmer, 2004). Defensive reasoning is perhaps the Model I strategy most frequently mentioned by Argyris. It is characterized by individuals making statements that contain distorted information, and when those statements are challenged, they become increasingly defensive in order to make some topics “undiscussable” (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). Embarrassment and fear drive the Model I socio-cognitive process (Palmer, 2004) and, in particular, defensive behavior. Organization defensive routines are designed to prevent or deflect threat or embarrassment. Consequently, addressing the real problem is avoided. Individuals are
so consumed with defending themselves that opportunities for productive contribution are missed (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Defensive routines are counterproductive, as they inhibit learning (Edmondson, 1996). They also create such a degree of interpenetration between individual and organizational defensiveness that it becomes difficult to disentangle the causal roles of these two levels of phenomena. The result is for individuals to experience mistrust, distancing, and cynicism about the potentiality for productive organizational learning around issues that are embarrassing or threatening (Argyris & Schön, 1996, p. 106).

This avoidance reduces the probability that productive inquiry and dialogue will occur. When others call attention to disagreements or conflicts, individuals trivialize them and cover up their patterns of behavior that have contributed to disagreement or conflict (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). In fact, with people interpreting behaviors through differing lenses (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), they often have different accounts of what actually happened. Even if individuals do test their perspectives about a disagreement or conflict, they tend to discuss them with others who share the same perspective, reinforcing their deeply held, underlying assumptions. Seldom do individuals test their perspectives of what actually happened by inviting dialogue with others who may have differing perspectives (Argyris & Schön, 1996, p. 107).

**Blame and punishment.** Defensive reasoning is often paired with blame and punishment. At the heart of explaining human behavior are the concepts of reasoning and causality (Argyris & Schön, 1996, p. 107). When individuals’ mistakes or blunders are called-out, they exhibit strong defensive reasoning and behaviors (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). Embodying an external locus of control (Argyris, 1998;
Csikszentmihalyi, 2003), individuals use fancy footwork (Argyris, 2000; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006) to attribute the mistake to other people, deflecting the blame from themselves and projecting it onto others. With the Model I socio-cognitive process, one party blames another (Argyris, 2000, 2006b; Palmer, 2004, 2011), and the second party responds by jumping into defensive mode and using fancy footwork to counter-blame the first party. This contributes to the vicious cycle of single-loop learning (Argyris, 2000; Argyris and Schön, 1996). As the vicious cycle continues, the original problem escalates, triggering additional resentment. The problem escalates, and the parties often punish each other through aggressive or passive-aggressive behavior (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Palmer, 2004, 2011). To justify their actions, the aggressors “dismiss, marginalize, demonize, or eliminate” (Palmer, 2011, p. 13) the targeted people.

**Subconscious strategies.** Hidden in the subconscious are learned social strategies to guard against threat and embarrassment. With the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010), people act in ways that contradict their selfhood—they live divided (Palmer, 2004)—in order to avoid breaking social rules and suffering the consequences (Baumeister et al., 2004).

Dividedness begins with denial, failure to see individuals’ own thoughts and behaviors for what they really are: a contradiction to their deeply held beliefs (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2004). If individuals break through the denial, and the inner self experiences a gnawing dissonance for one’s dividedness (Palmer, 2004), self-delusion takes hold, rationalizing thoughts and behaviors in order to suppress the dissonance (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2004). When the dissonance surfaces and begins to gnaw on the conscience again, individuals experience fear. That fear triggers a hopelessness for reconciling individuals’ deeply held,
underlying assumptions—the true selfhood (Palmer, 2004)—with their place in a Model I world (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004). Individuals then deny the true self (Palmer, 2004) to comply with the Model I world (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004, 2011). In order to fit into the social order of the organization, individuals may be silent on issues for which they have strong beliefs, or they may claim beliefs that they do not hold (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004). Individuals suppress negative feelings to avoid conflict, resulting in learning avoidance (Argyris & Schön, 1996).


Such rewards oppress the inner self. To allow themselves to become separated from [their] own souls (Palmer, 2004, p. 4), individuals must convince themselves that everything is fine. This is irrational behavior (Argyris & Schön, 1996), yet through acculturation (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kitayama et al., 2007; Oyserman & Lee, 2008), they have learned to suppress this awareness and employ a subconscious strategy of feigned rationality. Riddled with contradictions that would not stand up to scrutiny, Model I behavior has a built-in mechanism to protect it from examination (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Through cultural learning (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kitayama et al., 2007; Oyserman & Lee, 2008), people adhere to a social rule that makes all of this behavior undiscussable (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). This undiscussability is a mechanism to shield the vulnerable selfhood from the threats of the world (Palmer, 2004, p. 14).
Model I: Outcomes


Problem escalation. While Model I is the most commonly used socio-cognitive process in the dominant American culture, it is counterproductive, damaging relationships and failing to solve problems. The outcomes are shaped by the entire Model I socio-cognitive process, beginning with culturally informed underlying assumptions that go untested (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Edmondson, 1996; Palmer, 2011). As two parties engage in a social exchange, they are each operating according to the same Model I socio-cognitive process, yet for each person, the process is driven by one’s primary real value: the self (Kitayama et al., 2007). This creates a power struggle, as each party implements learned social strategies to win power for oneself (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996), regardless of the cost endured by the other people involved (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2011; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Palmer, 2004).

Pain and frustration. Wholeness is innate. "All of us arrive on earth with [with whole, true selves]. But from the moment of birth onward, the soul or true self is assailed by deformings forces from without and within: by racism, sexism, economic injustice, and other social cancers; by jealousy, resentment, self-doubt, fear, and other demons of the inner life" (Palmer, 2004, p. 34). Rather than reject such assailing forces that prevail in the dominant culture, the individual succumbs to dividedness (Palmer, 2004).
Palmer (2004) described dividedness as a fault line that runs within oneself. When individuals act on contradicting thoughts or behaviors driven by the culture, betraying their own deeply held beliefs and denying the true self, that fault line begins to crack. As this contradiction is repeated and develops into a pattern, the fault line fissures. Over time, this pattern is repeated. As living a life divided defines normalcy, the heart hardens. This pathological normalcy divorces the individual from one’s true self.

Individuals further adapt to cultural expectations (Palmer, 2004) and fine-tune their use of the Model I socio-cognitive process. They adopt Model I learned social strategies (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) in order to appeal to their individualistic values (Kitayama et al., 2007), while balancing the culture’s espoused values (Argyris, 2010; Schein, 2009). Individuals seek unilateral control (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) and social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Belliveau et al., 1996) and may justify deceiving or exploiting others for personal gain (Palmer, 2004). Characteristic of Model I, individuals may also issue blame and punishment in order to defend themselves and render the contradiction between one’s real and espoused values as undiscussable (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). The true self is no longer recognizable (Palmer, 2004).

Denying oneself (Palmer, 2004) through a pattern of self-censorship (Argyris & Schön, 1996) does have personal consequences. Palmer (2004) observed, “Afraid that our inner light will be extinguished or our inner darkness exposed, we hide our true identities from each other. In the process, we become separated from our own souls. We end up living divided lives, so far removed from the truth we hold within that we cannot know the integrity that comes from being what you are” (Merton, as cited in Palmer, 2004, p. 4).
Dividedness carries a cost. The fault line further ruptures when glimmers of one’s personal contradiction are realized. Individuals may experience dissonance or emptiness, which may manifest into anxiety or depression. Individuals may seek vices in an attempt to numb the empty self. These vices may take the form of harmful relationships, unhealthy consumption of food or alcohol, or other damaging thought-behavior patterns that were intended to numb the emptiness but, instead, rupture the fault line even further. We sense that something is missing in our lives and search the world for it, not understanding that what is missing is us (Palmer, 2004, p. 16). The dominant American culture’s Model I social rules reinforce espoused values and balk at efforts to listen to the true self (Palmer, 2004).

The Model I process causes hurt and pain (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2011; Palmer, 2004), resulting in expensive hidden costs borne by organizations (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2011), yet Model I remains the cultural default that is practiced in social relationships throughout the United States, including in organizations (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Edmondson, 1996; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2011).

**Mistrust.** Individuals may project their pain and frustration onto others, resulting in blame or resentment (Palmer, 2004). Because the Model I socio-cognitive process mandates undiscussability, these feelings are not shared, discussed, or challenged (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996). Instead, these negative feelings are left to fester. This produces unhealthy relationships. As these pent-up feelings snowball, relationships may fracture. With the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996), social costs are immense (Palmer, 2004, p. 7).

Negative feelings are projected onto others, as people do not take responsibility for their own behaviors and unhappiness. People may also project their negative feelings onto tangible
institutions, such as marriage, church, or organizations. They may also project blame on tacit institutions, such as democracy, capitalism, or religious faith (Palmer, 2004).

**Subconscious.** Individuals who project blame onto other people or institutions do not rightly blame the Model I socio-cognitive process for the dysfunctional cycle that produces such negative feelings. Instead, they have developed a skilled unawareness to shield the Model I process from scrutiny (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010). Skilled unawareness is often accompanied by other subconscious strategies, such as self-fulfilling prophesy and avoidance of productive learning (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Ford, 1999; Palmer, 2011).

**Skilled unawareness of resistance to learning and change.** In the U.S. and other Western cultures, individualism serves as a major mechanism for reinforcing the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Kitayama et al., 2007; Palmer, 2011). The result is resistance to productive learning and change (Ford, 1999). Default language patterns are designed to perpetuate the status quo and to resist change (Kimball, 2011; Mezirow, 2003).

"Quite simply, in the absence of people’s willingness to speak and listen differently, there can be no conversational shift and no organizational change" (Ford, 1999, p. 488).

Openly admitting they are opposed to learning would violate social rules. Furthermore, such opposition is generally held in the subconscious. Individuals tend to experience skilled unawareness that they are opposed to socio-cognitive learning. For example, while empowerment (Argyris, 1998; Ford, 1999) and employee engagement (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008) may convince the culture that these are methods for learning, they are merely masks that cover anti-learning intentions for maintaining unilateral control (Argyris, 1998, 2000). People operating under the Model I socio-cognitive process have blind spots (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Carlson, 2013; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Waggoner, 2011). They have created
skilled unawareness (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010), resulting in a lack of accountability. They are lost and do not even realize it, as they have become so accustomed to being lost (Palmer, 2004).

**Model I: Single-Loop Learning**

Single-loop learning (Argyris, 2000; Argyris & Schön, 1996) is the culture’s conduit (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) that perpetuates the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996). The protective process of single-loop learning can be compared to homeostasis, the mechanism used by the biological system as a ‘powerful stabilizing force’ (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 12). This process serves as the guardian of deeply held, underlying assumptions. Single-loop learning is the proverbial vicious cycle that interprets the overt behaviors of self and others and funnels those interpretations back to the Model I learned social strategies. These strategies are designed to gain unilateral control (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Walsh, 2010), accumulate social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Belliveau et al., 1996), blame (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Palmer, 2011), punish (Argyris, 2000, 2004; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004, 2011; Senge, 2006a), and defend oneself and one’s espoused values (Argyris, 2000; Palmer, 2011). The vicious cycle thrives because it averts the testing of deeply held, underlying assumptions (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2011). In fact, research reveals that people who are shown solid evidence contradicting their most fundamental beliefs often become more forceful in advocating those beliefs (Palmer, 2007, in Palmer, 2011, p. 16).

The prospect of identifying and challenging individuals’ underlying assumptions poses a threat to the status quo. Challenging the underlying assumptions threatens to trigger a change in the individuals’ underlying assumptions and to expose the contradiction between their real and
espoused values, whereby threatening the entire Model I socio-cognitive system (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2011).

**Model II Socio-Cognitive Process: An Alternative to the Cultural Default**

Despite the culture’s intense drive for continuity and the hegemonic forces designed to perpetuate the Model I socio-cognitive system, counter-forces are battling for change. These forces for change stem from the yearning for something better than divisiveness, toxicity, passivity, [and] powerlessness (Palmer, 2011, p. 23). The yearning is to live an undivided life (Palmer, 2004), a life that values humanity (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2011; Palmer, 1993, 2004, 2011).

Only when the pain of our dividedness becomes more than we can bear do most of us embark on an inner journey toward living “divided no more” (Palmer, 2004, p. 39). This inner journey leads the individual toward the Model II socio-cognitive process, the life-giving, learned alternative to the destructive Model I cultural default process (Edmondson, 1996; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004). As with Model I, each element of the Model II socio-cognitive process is shaped by the culture’s flowing patterns of meaning and practice, which flow between the society and the individual, producing bidirectional influence between the culture and the individual’s underlying assumptions (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004; 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007). However, unlike Model I, the Model II process exposes one’s underlying assumptions through double-loop learning (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004; 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). Bracketing premature judgment and seeking common ground (Mezirow, 2003, p. 60) with other people, Model II is driven by the value of wholeness (Palmer, 2004, 2011).
Model II: Values

The divided life is not a failure of ethics. It is a failure of human wholeness (Palmer, 2004, p. 7). The Model I socio-cognitive process is responsible for this failure. While Model I is characterized by idealistic values that are espoused, masking one’s real values (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) which are egocentric in nature (Kitayama et al., 2007), Model II values are fully transparent (Palmer, 2004). While the primary real value for Model I revolves around the desires and goals of the self (Kitayama et al., 2007), the primary real value for Model II is wholeness.

Wholeness is defined as an integrity that comes from being what you are (Wood, as cited in Palmer, 2004, p. 3). By focusing on being the person one was designed to be, rather than someone who plays the social game (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) and lives according to the social rules of the Model I world (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Kitayama et al., 2007), the individual experiences the peace of inner wholeness. While Model I’s real values focus on self-preservation (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010) and self-gratification (Kitayama et al., 2007), Model II values are centered on peace. This peace comes from living a life that is true to one’s integrity, freeing oneself from the Model I world in order to identify how to best use oneself in order to meet the needs of the world and benefit the common good (Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004).

Valuing wholeness means valuing the understanding of one’s true self and the true selves of others. Wholeness does not mean perfection: it means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life (Palmer, 2004, p. 5). Wholeness is accomplished by listening to one’s true self and finding purpose in using one’s talents to serve humanity, rather than living according to the world’s espoused expectations (Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011). When we understand
integrity for what it is, we stop obsessing over codes of conduct and embark on the more demanding journey toward being whole (p. 8).

Rejecting the Model I social game (Argyris, 2000; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), the individual recognizes the value of humanity (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2011; Palmer, 1993, 2004, 2011). The vehicle for realizing wholeness for understanding one’s true self and other people is to acknowledge and test one’s assumptions (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006).

Courage is necessary to choose wholeness because, in exposing one’s vulnerability, the individual risks cultural disapproval (Palmer, 2004) for breaking from Model I, the culture’s default socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000; Edmondson, 1996). We cannot embrace that challenge alone, at least, not for long: we need trustworthy relationships, tenacious communities of support, if we are to sustain the journey toward an undivided life (Palmer, 2004, p. 10).

**Model II: Learned Social Behaviors**

Human behavior is socially situated, richly contextualized, and conditionally expressed (Bandura, 2002, p. 276). Individuals tend to employ all three modes of human agency: (a) individual, (b) proxy, and (c) collective agency. The agency used at a given time depends on the context which is presented. For example, while individuals may employ individual agency in a highly competitive work environment, the same individuals may approach their families with collective agency. The fact that agency is contextual suggests that agency can be changed by altering the context. One example is by changing the organization’s culture from Model I to a Model II socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Bandura, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Palmer, 2004; Walsh, 2010).
Dialogue, the hallmark of Model II behaviors (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996), is one of the most significant methods for creating change (Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2011). Dialogue is defined as a form of consciously constructed conversation in which participants engage in a sustained and collaborative investigation into the underlying assumptions and certainties that underlie their everyday experiences and relationships with the intent of creating more effective interactions (Ford, 1999, p. 490). Dialogue is essential to ultimately realize wholeness by living a life undivided (Palmer, 2004, 2011). This idea is supported by Block (2008, as cited in Kimball, 2011), who wrote, “We change the culture by changing the nature of conversation. It’s about choosing conversations that have the power to create the future” (p. 8).

This conversation may take place with a circle of trust, in which the individual does most of the speaking while supporters listen and ask questions to help the discernment process (Palmer, 2004). Or, the conversation may take the form of a more active two-way exchange. In either case, Model II conversation aims to achieve wholeness through the Model II values of understanding self and others. This is accomplished through community, with open and honest sharing of thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Mezirow, 2000, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011). Openness, the precursor to the new language pattern, hinges on wanting the information we need in order to come closer to the truth [which occurs only] when we stop fearing whatever might challenge our convictions and value it instead (Palmer, 2011, p. 16, author’s emphasis).

**Circles of trust.** Circles of trust represent a rare type of community that supports one’s journey toward integrity, toward wholeness. Such a journey cannot be made alone, or it would be compromised by one’s narrow perspective and bias. The only guidance we can get on the inner
journey comes through relationships in which others help us discern our leadings (Palmer, 2004, p. 26). Such discernment means to distinguish between things through deep reflection and self-examination, particularly as the individual considers her future path.

The circle of trust is based on two guiding principles: that the soul or true self is real and powerful and that the soul can feel safe only in relationships that possess certain qualities (Palmer, 2004, p. 29). These qualities include a genuine, unconditional caring, as well as confidentiality, never to harm the discerner. The circle of trust is a group of people who are bound by trust, providing the degree of safety necessary for the individual to present one’s true, unguarded self. When an individual identifies the need for help from a circle of trust, she invites the individuals to gather as a group, soliciting their help (Palmer, 2004).

What makes a circle of trust unique is that its norms are countercultural (Palmer, 2004). With the Model I socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996), advice driven by others’ egocentric desires and goals (Kitayama et al., 2007) may mask as well-intentioned helping (Palmer, 2004). In response to someone sharing a dilemma, an individual using Model I gives advice. Such advice is driven by individualism, as it lets the advice-giver off the hook from further concern or accountability. The underlying logic behind the advice is: if you take my advice, you will surely solve your problem. If you take my advice but fail to solve your problem, you did not try hard enough. If you fail to take my advice, I did the best I could. So I am covered. No matter how things come out, I no longer need to worry about you or your vexing problem (Palmer, 2004, p. 117). The advice-giver simply moves on with life.

Contrary to American cultural norms, people within the circle of trust abstain from giving advice. They do not presume that they can or should discern another person’s path for them.
Such advice would only provide distraction during the personal discernment process and may lead the individual off-course. The goal of the people who comprise the circle of trust is to invite [the discerner’s] soul to speak and allow [the discerner] to listen, distinguishing the inner voice of truth from the inner voice of fear (Palmer, 2004, p. 27).

The purpose of the community is to encourage the discerner to listen to the words of one’s true self and to challenge the discerner with questions upon which to reflect. At a circle of trust gathering, the discerner does most of the speaking, sharing what is on her heart. The guiding process is for the discerner to speak as if she was holding up a mirror. She does not necessarily describe physical characteristics but instead describes the essence of herself, particularly as it relates to the issue with which she is wrestling (Palmer, 2004).

The discerner may choose to seat herself in a way that allows her to avoid directly facing the others in the circle of trust, if she finds direct eye contact distracting or if she suspects that such eye contact may trigger self-censorship. The goal is for the true self to flow freely toward discernment. For the discerner, the only ground rules for this process are to speak openly and honestly. Storytelling is an important element of this process, as the discerner speaks about experiences she considers relevant to the issue that is on her heart (Palmer, 2004). The goal is two-fold: (a) to reject culturally driven, espoused values and Model I strategies, such as self-censorship, and (b) to discern Model II values aimed at wholeness, allowing the true self to emerge from dormancy (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004).

This is accomplished through active listening among the individuals comprising the circle of trust. Occasionally, the listeners will ask open, honest questions in order the discerner to identify and examine the issues with which she is wrestling. The only time that members of the
circle of trust will speak is to ask these occasional questions disbursed throughout the individual’s discernment process. Ground rules of this process prevent the circle of trust from interrupting her personal discernment process by offering commentary or advice or asking leading questions. The circle of trust simply listens and asks questions to help the individual lift the cloak of espoused values and to hear her true self speak (Palmer, 2004).

The gathering of a circle of trust is typically two hours in duration, and generally a series of such gatherings is called by the discerner. She discontinues the gatherings only after discernment is reached, and she is at peace. Peace comes from allowing the true self to speak and discern one’s path. This sense of peace is manifested by a transformation toward wholeness, by a commitment to let the true self speak (Palmer, 2004).

The circle of trust has been described as a paradox of solitary experience that occurs in community. The thoughts and discernments are purely one’s own (Palmer, 2004). The community simply comes from creating a space that shuts out the assailing forces of the Model I world (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004). In this space, the community provides unconditional support by listening and asking open questions to help the discerner wrestle with the issue at hand and to listen to one’s true self. Palmer (2004) explained, “To understand true self—which knows who we are in our inwardness and whose we are in the larger world—we need both the interior intimacy that comes with solitude and the otherness that comes with community” (p. 54, author’s emphasis).

A circle of trust may be the preferred approach for some individuals within the organization, but it is not an approach that is coordinated organization-wide. For a circle of trust to meet, the individual must initiate the gathering without prompting or requirement, and the individual hand-selects the members who comprise her circle of trust (Palmer, 2004). This
approach may not be for everyone, but it may be the preferred approach among some members of the organization and should be mentioned as an option.

**Active two-way dialogue.** Like the circle of trust (Palmer, 2004), an active two-way dialogue is a method for an individual to better understand self and others through the Model II socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2003). While circles of trust provide a safe, controlled environment and a process in which to share (Palmer, 2004), active two-way dialogue is riskier. Because the active two-way dialogue lacks the built-in process, ground rules, and the safety of trusted individuals that the circle of trust offers, a danger exists that the active two-way dialogue may travel off-course, regressing to familiar Model I strategies. In response to embarrassment or perceived threats, the individuals may resort to the cultural default strategies characteristic of Model I, such as unilateral control, blame, and punishment (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

To prevent this type of derailment, the cultural norms for the ways people interact must change. Developing new cultural norms for interaction is accompanied by developing a new pattern language (Alexander, 1977, as cited by Kimball, 2011), or acceptable patterns for the ways people speak and otherwise interact with each other. To develop new language patterns, organizations should ask: "What patterns can we identify that work to support participants in productive conversations about what matters in organizations, to liberate energy, tap into collective wisdom, and unleash the power of self organization?" (Kimball, 2011, p. 9). The Model II socio-cognitive process is one such language pattern. Organization-wide, leaders should discuss with employees the differences between the Model I and Model II patterns, acknowledging the default tendency toward Model I and the desire to shift to a culture with

In developing the organization’s new language patterns (Ford, 1999; Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011), the undergirding strategies are consistent with the Model II behaviors (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) for: including people and inviting them to share their ideas and talents (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011; Walsh, 2010); providing freedom to disagree (Brehm, 2009; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006); discussing the undiscussable; gathering data by asking questions, listening, observing (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kimball, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011); and behaving respectfully (Palmer, 2004, 2011).

The new language pattern (Ford, 1999; Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011) begins by discussing and mutually agreeing upon the process that will be used for dialogue. Participants are encouraged establish ground rules for the discussion. By establishing this type of social contract—written or unwritten—beforehand, when the exchange is relatively emotionally neutral, the individuals identify a process that is agreeable to all involved. Having made this decision in advance of the conversation will reduce anxiety about the unexpected. In particular, the participants should agree how to proceed if they become aware that their discussion is veering into Model I confrontation or agenda-driven opinions, as well as how to bring the discussion back to constructive Model II dialogue (Block, 2000).

Transformative learning and change are accomplished through dialogue, particularly when individuals and groups of people, who ordinarily do not speak with each other, come together (Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2000, 2003; Palmer, 2011). Ford (1999) described change as “an unfolding of conversations” (p. 487), which is integrated into
already existing language patterns within an organization. In this way, the new conversations change the norms of the organization culture (Ford, 1999; Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011). Such transformative change cannot occur if silos remain intact and competing agendas prevail (Billett, 2001; Kimball, 2011). To initiate dialogue among people who do not typically interact with each other, inviting them to the conversation is the first step (Billett, 2001).

To encourage two-way interaction, Kimball (2011) recommended a generative dialogue approach. Generative dialogue provides just enough structure to channel the energy and keeps things moving and productive. These structures are liberating rather than confining (p. 8). Such structures may take the form of the ground rules co-created by the people who have gathered to participate in the dialogue. Liberating structures may also include organization development tools, such as large group methods like Open Space or Appreciative Inquiry (Kimball, 2011), or the use of narratives or stories (Marshak & Grant, 2011). These liberating structures are designed to promote productive dialogue and give everyone a voice (Kimball, 2011, p. 10). They are designed to avoid unilateral control. Generative dialogue provides room for creativity. While the process has some structure, the process encourages freedom and co-creation among the people engaging in dialogue.

Participants have the freedom to take the dialogue in the direction of their choice. Along with the freedom, there are caveats: Participants must follow the ground rules that they mutually agreed upon before the dialogue. In the ground rules, they should address what to do if the conversation reverts to the old Model I pattern and determine how to bring it back to the Model II language pattern. As long as they mutually commit to the ground rules, participants have the freedom to dialogue about what they believe is most important. They are encouraged to mutually
agree on outcomes, identifying how to proceed following the dialogue (Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011).

**Double-Loop Learning: First loop**

Through dialogue, underlying assumptions are acknowledged and tested, marking the first loop of Model II’s double-loop learning. In contrast, with Model I’s single-loop learning, underlying assumptions are not tested as the parties interact. With Model I, the underlying assumptions remain shrouded through defensiveness and fancy footwork (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Mezirow, 2003).

Underlying assumptions reflect worldview, the framework used to interpret experiences and understand reality. Through the first loop of Model II’s double-loop learning, dialogue leads individuals to apply what they have learned through conversation to analyze their assumptions. They begin by uncovering and acknowledging their deeply held, underlying assumptions. They then scrutinize those underlying assumptions, comparing them to the new information they have acquired through dialogue, through asking questions, listening, and observing (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011). Through this process, they may affirm their underlying assumptions, but often, they wrestle with those deeply held assumptions, in light of new information gleaned from dialogue. As they test their underlying assumptions through dialogue centered on resolving conflict (Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011), individuals may realize that the problem is me (Palmer, 2004, p. 53). This process supports the Model II values for understanding one’s true self and understanding other people (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004, 2011). Through the first loop of Model II’s double-loop learning process, each individual has the
opportunity to either affirm or change her underlying assumptions (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

**Model II: Outcomes**

**Problem resolution.** Organization problems are seldom resolved in a Model I organization culture. Attempts to use instrumental learning strategies to solve communicative problems are generally futile because the default socio-cognitive process is never addressed. Simply put, organizations with Model I patterns are not learning organizations. In contrast, the Model II organization culture uses instrumental learning strategies to resolve only technical issues. For issues involving people, the Model II organization culture applies communicative learning strategies. By discussing the undiscussable and testing assumptions, people using the Model II socio-cognitive process are able to pinpoint the real problems and work toward resolution (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Edmondson, 1996; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004).

**Productive learning and change.** If liberating structures are used to encourage Model II’s generative dialogue and to reject the Model I cultural default strategies, the opportunity is created not only for problem resolution but also for productive learning and change (Edmondson, 1996; Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2011). Productive learning and change occurs when people or groups of people, who ordinarily do not interact, agree to dialogue (Kimball, 2011). No matter how damaged the relationships are, there is hope for healing through dialogue. Palmer (2004) wrote, “Nature uses devastation to stimulate new growth, slowly but persistently healing her own wounds. Knowing this gives me hope that human wholeness—mine, yours, ours—need not be a utopian dream, if we can use devastation as a seedbed for new life” (p. 5).
Does the organization learn as a whole, or does learning occur only individually amongst some members of the organization? Some disagreement exists about whether learning can truly occur at the organization-level or whether learning is simply the outcome of a collection of individual learners within the organization (Akün et al., 2003). However, Hazen (1994, as cited by Ford, 1999) posited that organization change occurs simultaneously among both the organization and the individuals who comprise the organization. Change occurs as a direct result of a conversational shift, through the development of a new language pattern (Kimball, 2011). Similarly, dialogue was identified by several authors (Ford, 1999; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; van der Heijden, 1997, as cited by van der Merwe et al., 2007) as an essential method not only for changing business outcomes but also for changing the socio-cognitive patterns of thinking and action that are embedded in an organization’s culture.

Organization change requires organization-wide common ground among individuals’ socio-cognitive approaches (Ford, 1999; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; van der Heijden, 1997, as cited by van der Merwe et al., 2007). Adopting the Model II socio-cognitive process shifts the reality of the organization and the people who comprise it. Since conversational reality provides the context in which people act and interact, shifting what people pay attention to shifts their reality and provides an opportunity for new actions and results to occur (Ford, 1999, p. 488).

An organization culture that has a history of predominantly using individual and proxy agencies (Bandura, 2002) may increase collective agency by changing the context from a Model I to a Model II culture (Bandura, 2002; Block, 2000; Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011). This, in turn, may increase the organization’s efficacy, as the organization experiences first-hand that its members did as a community positively influence the organization’s path (Bandura,

**Trust.** Trust stems from a new approach to leadership which focuses on building community and leading co-creation. The Model II socio-cognitive process challenges how the dominant American culture approaches leadership. The dominant culture shapes and is shaped by Model I’s definition of leadership (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Bandura, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Kitayama et al., 2007; Palmer, 2004). With the Model I socio-cognitive process, leadership is espoused but is contradicted by actions for gaining unilateral control. Unilateral control is embedded into the hierarchical design of traditional American organizations. Model II does not approach leadership through hierarchy. Instead, leadership is approached through community. People who trust their leadership and are confident that they can accomplish the desired changes through collective effort will tend to participate in these efforts (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004).

With an organization that has embedded the Model II socio-cognitive process into its culture, all members of the organization co-create its present and future reality (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Marshak & Grant, 2011). This requires a higher degree of leadership than does a hierarchical structure. While hierarchy operates according to identified goals, a community is a chaotic, emergent, and creative force field that needs constant tending (Palmer, 2004, p. 76).

Leadership is particularly essential in communities where deeply held, underlying assumptions, values, and learned social strategies are countercultural, as is the case with communities that use the Model II socio-cognitive process. Model II leaders are not driven by
command-and-control routines. Instead, their authority is appointed to them by others. With the Model II socio-cognitive process, the community chooses its leader, an individual perceived as having integrity and wholeness, living an undivided life (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2004).

**Wholeness.** With the Model I socio-cognitive process, the values are not supported by the outcomes, which is not surprising, given that Model I strives to make the thought-behavior patterns undiscussable. In contrast, Model II values are supported by Model II outcomes. The value of wholeness is threaded throughout the Model II socio-cognitive process. In support of this value, the learned social strategies revolving around dialogue are designed to achieve wholeness. The values come full circle, and wholeness is realized as the outcome of the Model II socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004, 2011).

Through the journey toward wholeness, with newly applied Model II thought-behavior patterns, the individual recognizes a life divided no more. The individual reclaimed the integrity of her birthright (Palmer, 2004), the integrity that comes from being what you are (Wood, as cited in Palmer, 2004, p. 3).

**Double-Loop Learning: Second Loop**

Through the second loop of double-loop learning, individuals reflect on what they have learned from the outcomes experienced. Individuals consider what was learned from the outcomes and compare those learnings to their underlying assumptions. With reflection at the second loop, individuals are able to affirm or change those underlying assumptions according to what was learned from the full Model II socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004).
Double-loop learning is the hallmark of the Model II socio-cognitive process because it is the vehicle for identifying and challenging underlying assumptions. Through this process, the individual no longer operates dual frameworks, one driven by espoused values and the other driven by one’s individualistic real values. Instead, with the Model II socio-cognitive process, the individual operates only one framework. The individual’s underlying assumptions have been named and tested which, in turn, guide one’s behaviors (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Palmer, 2011).

**Application to Critical Theory**

Critical theory can be applied to demonstrate the transformative Model II socio-cognitive process. This transformative process mirrors the central components of critical theory: penetrating ideology, countering hegemony, and working democratically (Brookfield, 2005, p. 10). Critical theory applies to manager-employee relationships due to tension resulting from the power differential (Brookfield, 2000, 2005; Ford, 1999).

**Penetrating Ideology**

Ideologies are sets of values, beliefs, myths, explanations, and justifications that appear self-evidently true and morally desirable (Brookfield, 2005, p. 129). Espoused values can be described as ideologies. Challenging dominant ideologies, or espoused values (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Palmer, 2004; Schein, 2009), is foundational to critical theory. Through ideology critique, everyday assumptions of the dominant culture’s reality are critically examined, exposing inequities and oppression (Brookfield, 2000). For example, a manager may demonstrate patterned blindness with employees (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Carlson, 2013; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). He may not recognize that his words relating
to empowerment and employee engagement create blindness, reflecting a cloak of espoused values that disguise his real values (Argyris, 1998; Schein, 2009).

Countering Hegemony

Those in power use the process of hegemony to convince the oppressed that the espoused values of the powerful are, in fact, true and, furthermore, that they are in the best interest of the oppressed. Hegemony is a manipulative system designed to influence those not in power to embrace dominant ideologies (Brookfield, 2005; Ford, 1999), or espoused values (Argyris, 2000; Schein, 2009).

Hegemonies are tightly ingrained into societal norms. They are behavioral patterns with rules designed for the dominant culture to ensure that they will come out on top, through manipulation of those they oppress (Brookfield, 2005). One example of a powerful hegemony (Brookfield, 2000, 2005; Ford, 1999) is the Model I socio-cognitive process. The hegemony of Model I goes unchallenged because the organization practices skilled unawareness (Argyris, 2000; Brookfield, 2005). The Model I system is designed to be adversarial, with both opposing parties vying to win at all costs. However, this system is rigged, ensuring that those in power, the dominant culture, will always be the victors. In this way, those in power seek to convince the oppressed that it is in their best interest to abandon their own values and instead to adopt the oppressors’ values (Brookfield, 2005). As a result, the Model I socio-cognitive process is a powerful hegemonic system that is designed to perpetuate oppression.

For example, a manager may expect employees to own a change initiative that they were not invited to help create. He may expect employees to know how to support this change initiative and how to adjust their other work responsibilities to accommodate this new change. However, he fails to communicate the nature and the purpose of the change. He also fails to
invite employees to contribute to planning the change or, at the very least, to keep them informed throughout the planning process. Instead, he springs the change on them at the time of implementation, expecting them to know just what to do to make the ambiguous change initiative a success.

The manager’s actions reflect the Model I learned social strategies for achieving unilateral control while suppressing negativity and acting rationally (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010). He may espouse the value of employee engagement, as evidenced by the use of buzz words. A central component of hegemony is the dissemination of an ideology that serves the interests of the few while purporting to represent the many (Brookfield, 2005, p. 39). Words are powerful in perpetuating hegemony (Ford, 1999; Mezirow, 2000). Buzz words may be used as hegemonic tools in an attempt to convince employees that they are important and that they should be internally committed to the change initiative (Argyris, 1998; Brookfield, 2005).

Employee engagement is an espoused value, the purpose of which is to influence employees to align themselves with the Model I socio-cognitive process of the dominant ideology (Argyris, 1998, 2000). Using buzz words, such as employee engagement, is a form of hegemony, designed to convince employees that it is in their best interest to align themselves with the dominant ideology, the ideals held by management (Argyris, 1998; Brookfield, 2000, 2005). However, employee engagement represents only the espoused values of management. The individuals’ real values are those that are hallmarks of the Model I socio-cognitive process: to control, win, suppress negative feelings, and act rationally (Argyris, 1998, 2000). These real values are simply wrapped in the guise of the espoused value of employee engagement.

Hegemonic tools are designed to sabotage the oppressed, yet people continue to operate under the rules of the Model I socio-cognitive process. They are blind to the fact that they (are)
blindô (Argyris, 2000, p. 31). They are operating under a slew of unchallenged assumptions. Where, then is their hope for liberation from the vicious cycle of this hegemony? A critical theorist would say that their liberation would begin by doing an ideology critique, penetrating hegemony, and seeking to work democratically.

**Working Democratically**

The Model II socio-cognitive process includes penetrating ideology and countering hegemony, in order that people may work democratically (Brookfield, 2000, 2005; Mezirow, 2003). Dialogue, or discourse, is the primary method for the Model II process. Discourse Ŕis not based on winning arguments; it centrally involves finding agreement, welcoming difference, ŕrying on ŕother points of view, identifying the common in the contradictory, tolerating the anxiety implicit in paradox, searching for synthesis, and reframingô (Mezirow, 2000, p. 13).

Using the process of double-loop learning (Argyris, 2000), individuals assess their own assumptions, sharing perspectives with each other to help each other identify and challenge their deeply held, underlying assumptions. Reframing, the process of considering reality from another personô lens, is essential for challenging underlying assumptions. Managers reframe and seek to understand employeesô frames of reference. Similarly, employees reframe and seek to understand the managerô frame of reference. Through this process, the manager and employees search for common understanding (Mezirow, 2000, 2003), in support of Model II values for understanding oneô true self and seeking to understand other people (Palmer, 2004).
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explain the patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes that are needed for an organization to be a learning organization. The study was approached by: (a) diagramming a model to better understand Argyris’s (2000) theory, incorporating the contributions of other authors and adding the mutual constitution of culture to the theory, (b) using the model to make predictions about the values, behaviors, and outcomes of a learning organization, and (c) empirically testing those predictions.

The theory for this study was developed using Dubin’s (1969) approach to theory building, which emphasizes a process of "theory-then-research" (Lynham, 2002, p. 242), a strategy supported by Yin (2009) for positivistic case study. Dubin’s (1969) theory building approach is comprised of eight steps. The first four steps of the process are dedicated to developing the conceptual framework of the theory, identifying the: (a) units of analysis, (b) laws of interaction, (c) boundaries, and (d) system states of the theory (Dubin, 1969). The final four steps are dedicated to the research process, with the overarching goal of verifying the theory through research grounded in data (Lynham, 2002). Steps 5-8 are comprised of: (e) developing the propositions or predictions about the theory, (f) identifying empirical indicators to measure the predictions, (g) developing hypotheses, and (h) testing the theory (Dubin, 1969).

Units of Analysis

Units represent the building blocks of a theory. Units of analysis are represented by five dichotomies: unit versus event, attribute versus variable, real versus nominal, primitive versus sophisticated, and collective versus member (Dubin, 1969). These distinctions are important because they differentiate ideas that are purely philosophical in nature containing conceptual
theories that are untested with ideas that comprise theories that are tested through research that is grounded in data (Dubin, 1969; Lynham, 2002; Yin, 2009).

**Unit Distinctions**

While an event represents a singular, unique occurrence, a unit is evident in multiple occurrences. A theory about a unique event will remain philosophical. Unique events cannot be tested because they lack a pattern to use as a basis for developing predictions to test. In contrast, a unit is typically part of a pattern, on which a prediction is made and tested (Dubin, 1969).

Units may take the form of either attributes or variables. Attributes are characteristics or qualities that are nominal in nature. With units that take the form of attributes, the theory indicates whether or not that particular characteristic or quality is present, but as a nominal measure, it is not a unit that can be assessed in terms of degree. In contrast, units that take the form of variables are measured by degree of presence. Therefore, while attributes are measured by nominal scales, variables in the social sciences are typically measured by ordinal or interval scales (Dubin, 1969).

Units of analysis are also categorized by whether they are considered real or nominal units. In this case, the term “nominal” differs from the definition of “nominal scale,” as discussed regarding the attribute versus variable distinction. Real units are those for which empirical indicators can be identified or created as part of the theory development process. In testing a theory, instruments measure real units through the testing of empirical indicators. In contrast, a nominal unit is a unit for which empirical indicators cannot be identified. Therefore, while real units of analysis are tested, nominal units of analysis remain solely philosophies that are not tested (Dubin, 1969).
Dubin (1969) also described units of analysis as either primitive or sophisticated. Primitive units are those that are undefined, while sophisticated units are defined. Both primitive and sophisticated units are evident in the natural and social sciences. Primitive units may occur in a new, emerging theory or when an empirical finding from outside a theory becomes evident. With scientific research, primitive units typically result when findings present unexpected, undefined attributes or variables. Authors of philosophical work tend to conceptualize a primitive unit, rather than identify it through research grounded in data. However, primitive units may be used in scientific research as well. Primitive units may be selectively used in theory building when a researcher introduces a primitive unit to an existing theory that is otherwise comprised of well-defined, sophisticated units. In this case, the researcher examines the data to understand the primitive unit’s role when introduced to the well-defined theory. Through this process, the researcher seeks to define the unit, converting it from primitive to sophisticated. Primitive units may also be used in emerging theories. Through repeated testing, the units that are found to support the theory become further defined, thus moving from primitive to sophisticated. As a result, the once-emerging theory becomes further defined as well.

The final dichotomy identified by Dubin (1969) in distinguishing units of analysis is the consideration of collective versus member. With a member unit, the element is singular. With a collective unit, a grouping is represented by the unit. This distinction is important as the researcher typically strives to develop a theory with units that are consistently member-oriented or collective-oriented throughout the theory. However, the nature of a theory is sometimes designed to test interaction between an individual and a collective. In either case, Dubin explained that the researcher should analyze the units of analysis to determine whether or not they can be reduced to a consistent orientation of either member or collective.
Unit Types

In defining units of analysis, Dubin (1969) identified five types of units: enumerative, associative, relational, statistical, and summative, as well as complex units, which represent a combination of at least two of the five types. Enumerative units are universal properties of the population being studied. With enumerative units, these properties are always present to some degree, and there is no zero value or absence of the property among the individuals within the population. Demographic variables, such as sex and age, are examples of enumerative units. Associative units are like enumerative units, except associative units do have a zero value; the property may be absent among some of the individuals within the population. Examples of associative units include leadership and income. A relational unit is differentiated from enumerative and associative units because relational units are based on an interaction or combination of properties. Examples of relationship units include subordination, ethnocentrism, and status. A statistical unit illustrates the distribution of the property among the population. Statistical units take three forms: central tendencies, dispersion, and relative position among the distribution. Two examples of statistical units are heterogeneity and middle class. Another type of unit is the summative unit, which is a unit that describes a multifaceted system, having the property that derives from the interaction among a number of other properties (p. 61). Mass society is an example of a summative unit. Finally, complex units represent the combination of at least two of the five types of units. An example is median age, which combines an enumerative unit (i.e., age) with a statistical unit (i.e., median).

A theory that includes only one of the five types of units is limited. Dubin (1978, as cited by Lynham, 2002) recommended using a variety of unit types in the development of the theory. Identifying the units of analysis is an important step in the research process, as it influences the
kinds of studies that can later be used to gather and study data on the theory and, ultimately, be used to verify and refine the theory (Lynham, 2002, p. 248). This study’s unit types are described below, in conjunction with unit identification.

**Unit Identification**

In selecting the units of analysis, a scientist looks at things in the world of observations and then attempts to model their interactions (Dubin, 1969, pp. 50-51). Researchers approach this process differently than individuals whose focus is purely conceptual. Researchers whose approach is grounded in data base the units on their observations of the real world.

This study approaches units of analysis from a scholar-practitioner perspective (Argyris & Schön, 1996). The concepts of the theory are drawn largely from prior research, grounded in data, from the work of Argyris (2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010) and his colleague, Schön (1996). For this study, however, some of the units of analysis differ from that of Argyris and Schön. While the main concept is based on Argyris’ theory, the units of analysis are based on the researcher’s observations of the real world, in keeping with Dubin’s (1969) approach.

The units of analysis for the work of Argyris (2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010) and his colleague, Schön (1996) were: governing variables, action strategies, and consequences. (See Argyris [2000, pp. 75, 77] for the original models depicting Argyris’ theory on the Model I and Model II theories-in-use.)

This study proposes a socio-cognitive systems learning model as a tool for understanding and applying Argyris’ (2000, 2004, 2006, 2010) theory. This model addresses both the what and the how of thinking (Oyserman & Lee, 2008, p. 326). While only the Model II units of analysis are the focus of this study, the Model I units are described below for comparison purposes, in order to build understanding of model as a whole.
**Model I values.** Model I values may be categorized as a complex unit of analysis, defined as a combination of at least two of the five unit types identified by Dubin (1969). Deconstructing this complex unit, the values component is enumerative, as it is always present to some degree with no zero value. Values specific to social relationships are contextual (Bandura, 2002), a characteristic of the associative unit type. Further deconstructing this complex unit, the espoused and real functions of the values interact, as characteristic of a relational unit type (Dubin, 1969). With Model I, the espoused and real functions are contradictory (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996), with the espoused values representing the ideals that are espoused by the culture and the real values representing the individualistic desires and goals of the self (Kitayama et al., 2007; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Schein, 2009). The combination of these espoused and real values produces a paradox (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Palmer, 2004). To summarize, in deconstructing the Model I values unit, this unit is comprised of enumerative values and a paradoxical, relational interaction of espoused and real functions. With this multifaceted combination of unit types, the Model I values unit has an overall classification as a complex unit type (Dubin, 1969).

**Model I learned social behaviors.** Model I learned social behaviors include defensive behaviors and strategies for seeking unilateral control, as well as subconscious strategies for convincing oneself that this behavior does not contradict one’s espoused values (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). As a unit of analysis, Model I learned social strategies may be classified as the associative unit type. Dubin (1969) described associative unit types as properties of some, but not all, contexts experienced by the individual or social system. As an associative unit type, Model I learned social strategies are contextual. This unit is not universally present. Therefore, this unit of analysis may have a zero value, measured as the
absence of the unit. Some individuals within the social system may not employ Model I learned social strategies in the context examined as part of this study.

**Model I outcomes.** Model I outcomes include problem escalation, pain and frustration, and mistrust. In addition, this unit includes the following subconscious Model I outcomes: skilled unawareness of personal accountability, resistance to productive learning and change, and self-fulfilling prophesy (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Ford, 1999). Model I outcomes, as a unit of analysis, is categorized as the associative type, as it is context-based and may be absent among some individuals in some contexts (Dubin, 1969).

**Model II values.** Model II values (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) are centered on wholeness, through understanding one’s true self and mutually understanding other people (Palmer, 2004). Model II values may be categorized as a complex unit of analysis. Within this complex unit, the values component is enumerative (Dubin, 1969). However, social values may be contextual (Bandura, 2002) and vary person by person (Palmer, 2004), a characteristic of the associative unit type. Furthermore, Model II values contain a relational component (Dubin, 1969), the consistency between espoused and real values (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

With the complex unit type of social values, an individual may exhibit Model I values in one context, such as with one’s organization, while exhibiting Model II values in another context, such as with one’s family. Other individuals may consistently demonstrate Model I values, the cultural default, and may have no contexts in which they demonstrate Model II values. Model II values are contextual and may have a zero value, and by deconstructing this unit, three unit types—enumerative, relational, and associative—are evident between the distinct
components of the deconstructed unit. Therefore, a complex unit type is an appropriate classification for Model II values.

**Model II learned social behaviors.** Model II learned social behaviors are centered on dialogue and "discussing the undiscussable" to acknowledge and test assumptions (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004). Like Model II values, Model II learned social behaviors comprise a unit of analysis that can be classified as an associative type, as this unit is context-based. Model II learned social behaviors may be present to some degree or absent, depending on the situation and the individual or social system. This unit is not universal. The unit may have a zero value, signifying the absence of the unit. Some participants may not be used to Model II behaviors in the context examined as this part of the study (Dubin, 1969).

**Model II outcomes.** Model II outcomes are centered on wholeness (Palmer, 2004), as characterized by effective problem-solving, productive learning and change (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996), and trust (Palmer, 2004). As a unit of analysis, Model II outcomes are best categorized as an associative unit type, given that this unit may vary by individual and context (Dubin, 1969). Model II outcomes may be present, in varying degrees, or they may be absent.

**Laws of Interaction**

The laws of interaction illustrate how the units of analysis interrelate (Dubin, 1969, Lynham, 2002). The socio-cognitive systems learning model depicts sequential laws of interaction. These sequential laws illustrate an ordered interaction of units of analysis as they occur across time. Because time is an important element of this law, the units of analysis are provided in a particular order, showing how they precede or succeed the other units of analysis.
While sequential laws of interaction do demonstrate a particular order of the units of analysis across time, they do not imply causality (Dubin, 1969, Lynham, 2002).

**Cultural Flow of Underlying Assumptions**

The nature of underlying assumptions forms the basis for the Model I or Model II socio-cognitive processes. Through the cultural process, an individual’s underlying assumptions and the organization’s assumptions bidirectionally influence each other (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007). This bidirectional influence occurs as implicit and explicit (Kitayama et al., 2007) patterns of meaning and practice flow (Adams & Markus, 2004) between the underlying assumptions of the individual and the underlying assumptions of the organization (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

These cultural, flowing patterns contain a mix of historical and newly accepted ideas, which flow through behavioral schemas and practices, artifacts, institutions, and icons of the social system (Kitayama et al., 2007; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, as cited in Adams & Markus, 2004). This flow between the individual and the social system (e.g., the organization, the American society) generates deeply held, underlying assumptions about the self, other people (Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007), the environment, and rules for thought and behavior (Kitayama et al., 2007).

**Embedded within Model I and Model II processes.** The cultural, flowing patterns of meaning (Adams & Markus, 2004) that bidirectionally influence the individual and the organization are embedded within each of the units of analysis of the Model I and Model II socio-cognitive processes. In this way, culture influences values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes. For each of these units, individuals influence the organization through culture, and
similarly, the organization influences individuals (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

**Model I Socio-Cognitive Process**

Through a culturally learned process, Model I is ingrained as the default socio-cognitive process in a variety of cultures, including the dominant American culture. Through this default process, underlying assumptions are ingrained in Model I values, which include both espoused values and the real values that are centered upon individualistic desires and goals. Because the Model I cultural default process was learned from an early age, the operation of underlying assumptions within one’s value system is implicit (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Edmondson, 1996; Kitayama et al., 2007; Mezirow, 2003). The mutual constitution of culture (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007) influences Model I values, both espoused and real (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Model I values are succeeded by Model I learned social behaviors. This interaction is implicit in nature. With Model I, the learned social behaviors include explicit strategies that are driven by goals for acquiring unilateral control and defending oneself, as well as subconscious strategies to protect the learned social behaviors from scrutiny (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996). Model II learned social behaviors (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) are influenced by the mutual constitution of culture (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

Model I learned social behaviors are succeeded by Model I outcomes. The interaction between these two dimensions is explicit in nature, meaning that the individual is aware of this sequential relationship. The Model I outcomes include problem escalation, pain and frustration,
and mistrust. While the individual is aware of those outcomes, other outcomes are held in the subconscious. Subconscious outcomes include skilled unawareness, resistance to productive learning and change, and self-fulfilling prophesy (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Ford, 1999; see Figure 3). The bidirectional influence of culture between individual and organization is also evident among Model I outcomes, both conscious and subconscious.

Through single-loop learning, the Model I outcomes are succeeded by learned social behaviors. Those behaviors are again succeeded by Model I outcomes. This process of single-loop learning creates a vicious cycle, reinforcing both the learned social behaviors and the outcomes. The socio-cognitive systems learning model modifies Argyris and Schön’s (1996) definition by positing that with single-loop learning, values including the embedded underlying assumptions remain unchanged. Through the single-loop learning process, the assumptions surrounding the Model I outcomes are implicitly filtered back to the organization as a whole through the culture’s flowing patterns of meaning and practice (Adams & Markus, 2004). However, those assumptions are not tested. As a result, the Model I socio-cognitive process continues without examination of individuals’ underlying assumptions embedded within their values. In this way, the individual subconsciously avoids productive learning and change (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Additionally, the model posits that the learned behaviors change very little with single-loop learning. The Model I outcomes fail to produce the desired results, but instead of testing the underlying assumptions that influence values and learned social behaviors in order to achieve different outcomes, the individual’s strategies for obtaining unilateral control and defending oneself are reinforced. This creates the vicious cycle of single-loop learning (Argyris, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006).
**Model II Socio-Cognitive Process**

As with the Model I socio-cognitive process, each Model II unit is embedded with the cultural flowing patterns (Adams & Markus, 2004) of both implicit and explicit (Kitayama et al., 2007) meaning and practice. These patterns of meaning and practice influence underlying assumptions as they flow (Adams & Markus, 2004) bidirectionally between the individual and the organization, influencing each other through mutual constitution (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

In learning organizations, patterns of organization culture are embedded within each unit of analysis of the Model II socio-cognitive process. In this way, the values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes of the organization and the individuals who comprise the organization influence each other through culture (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007).

Like the Model I socio-cognitive process, the underlying assumptions depicted in the Model II values include deeply held beliefs about: the self, other people, the environment, and rules for thought and behavior (Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007). However, instead of using the cultural default to process values, the organization deliberately uses an alternative process (Edmondson, 1996).

Social cognition will be routed through the cultural default process to Model I values, unless an intervention (Bartunek, Austin, & Seo, 2008; Edmondson, 1996; Mezirow, 2003) or feedback loop (Burke, 2008) is implemented to prompt the testing of assumptions (Edmondson, 1996). The intervention (Bartunek, Austin, & Seo, 2008; Edmondson, 1996) or feedback loop (Burke, 2008) may occur on an organization-level. One example is an intervention facilitated by an organization development practitioner to help organization members develop awareness of
their dysfunctional Model I patterns of thinking and behavior. Drilling further, organization members would develop awareness and learn to question their underlying assumptions guiding the Model I patterns (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Mezirow, 2003). The intervention may also occur on an individual level, as Palmer (2004) described, when individuals’ dividedness causes them to reach rock-bottom, prompting reevaluation of their deeply held, underlying assumptions through a circle of trust.

This alternative process, which contradicts the cultural default that is evident in the dominant American culture, is triggered by underlying assumptions in support of Model II values. These values are centered on wholeness, achieved through understanding one’s true self and understanding other people. Values are succeeded by Model II learned social behaviors. These behaviors include: inviting others to dialogue, and gathering data by explaining one’s self-perspective, asking questions, listening, and observing. The behaviors also include making inferences based on the gathered data in order to test assumptions and distinguish between real and espoused values.

Through the first loop of the double-loop learning cycle in the proposed model, the Model II socio-cognitive process is routed from learned social behaviors back to values, with their embedded underlying assumptions. This provides opportunity for individuals to learn from the inferences and tested assumptions. They reflect on the dialogue and the findings from other Model II behaviors to further examine their values by testing deeply held, underlying assumptions about self, other people, the environment, and rules for thought and behavior. Through examination, individuals may change their deeply held, underlying assumptions. The intent of examination is to distinguish between real and espoused values, to seek wholeness by understanding the true self and other people. Continuing the first loop of the learning cycle,
values are succeeded by learned social behaviors, in which the individual repeats the process for inviting others to dialogue and gathering data. This completes the first loop of the double-loop learning cycle.

The learned social behaviors are succeeded by Model II outcomes. The overarching outcome is wholeness, characterized by problem resolution, productive learning and change, trust, and peace. Through the second loop of this model's double-loop learning cycle, the Model II socio-cognitive process is routed from outcomes to the individuals' values, with their embedded underlying assumptions. Based on the Model II outcomes, learning occurs as individuals further examine their underlying assumptions to determine what the outcomes taught them about their underlying assumptions. Individuals examine their underlying values, considering what the Model II outcomes taught them about those values. Specifically, they consider whether their values were, in fact, centered on wholeness or whether there were any lingering, contradictory espoused and real values that need untangling. Continuing the second loop, the individuals rely on learned social behaviors to further dialogue and gather data, to test assumptions and identify any residual Model I values to examine. Completing the second loop, the learning occurs from further reflection on the Model II outcomes.

**Boundaries**

The theory at the heart of this study is intended to help make sense of real-world processes (Dubin, 1969; Lynham, 2002), specifically the thought-behavior processes related to social exchange in an organization. Boundaries must be determined in order to define the case, limiting the extent to which the study will apply. These boundaries may be related to the units of analysis or their laws of interaction and may be established by criteria that are either internal or external to the model. For this study, the boundaries are related to the theory's laws of
interaction. In keeping with Dubin’s (1969) approach, the boundaries were identified through logic, prior to empirical testing (Lynham, 2002).

**Open versus Closed Boundary**

Dubin’s (1969) approach addresses the degree to which the system is open or closed. A closed system is usually defined as one in which there is no exchange between the system and its environment. An open system is one in which some kind of exchange takes place between the system and its environment (p. 127). Because the socio-cognitive systems learning model is highly influenced by the environment, this would be considered an open system. Environmental factors such as impactful interactions with the clients and family members that NSC serves, state and national politics, legislation, cultural trends, changes in organization staff, interventions, and major personal life events among staff may influence the organization’s tendency to operate according to the Model I or Model II socio-cognitive process.

**Boundary-Determining Criterion**

In order to understand and explain the values, behaviors, and outcomes needed for an organization to be a learning organization, a bounded case was used. For this single-case study, the bounded case was a single organization: the National Service Coalition. A staff role with NSC was the single boundary-determining criterion.

**System States**

Identification of system states is the fourth and final stage in the concept development portion of the theory building process. Dubin (1976, 1978, as cited by Lynham, 2002) described a system state as a condition of the system being modeled in which all the units of the systems take on characteristic values that have persistence through time, regardless of the length of the time interval (p. 256). In describing the simultaneous function of units within the system, Dubin

Dubin (1969) identified three criteria that are characteristic of system states: inclusiveness, persistence, and determinance. Inclusiveness means that all units of the theory will be part of a system state, while persistence means that the system state persists over time. Determinance means that the collection of units is measurable and distinctive (Lynham, 2002).

These three criteria are represented in three system states of the socio-cognitive systems learning theory: (a) the cultural patterns of meaning and practice flow between the individual and the organization, influencing each other, (b) the Model I socio-cognitive learning system, comprised of Model I values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes, and (c) the Model II socio-cognitive learning system, comprised of Model II values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes. The units of analysis in each of these three system states are measurable and distinctive. All three system states persist to some degree over time, and between these three system states, each unit of analysis is represented, thus meeting the criterion of inclusiveness (Dubin, 1969; Lynham, 2002).

**Socio-Cognitive Systems Learning Model**

Argyris (2010) asserted that "the good news is that [the culture's] powerful traps can begin to be changed and reduced during relatively straightforward interventions that emphasize social and cognitive skills." (p. 4). The socio-cognitive systems learning model reflects the social and cognitive elements of systems learning. The socio-element acknowledges a social process of interdependent players. The cognitive element describes the mental programs that humans use to guide their thought-behavior patterns (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The systems element acknowledges that no component of the process occurs in isolation (Palmer, 2004). This systems...
perspective is a hallmark of culture, in that culture is made by people interacting, and at the same time determining further interaction (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 24). Reflection on past social interaction informs thinking and future behavior (Mezirow, 2003; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), a cultural pattern of meaning and practice that flows between the individual and the organization, creating a system state (see Figure 1; Adams & Markus, 2004; Akiin et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007). The system state of culture is embedded within each unit of analysis of the other system states.

A socio-cognitive systems learning model was developed to diagram and build upon Argyris’ (2000) theory of organization learning, with the goal to better understand the essence of his theory and explain how it can be applied and tested. While this model primarily reflects the concepts posited by Argyris, the model also integrates cultural research (Adams & Markus, 2004; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kitayama et al., 2007; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). As part of this study, new components were introduced to round-out the model, further explaining the systems learning process in the spirit of Argyris’ (2000) theory.

Figure 1. Socio-cultural learning. Sources: Adams & Markus, 2004; Kitayama et al., 2007.
**Prediction**

Developing predictions, the fifth step in the theory in the overall theory development process, marks the beginning of the Phase II of this process: the research process. Through the research process, the conceptual theory developed in Phase I is empirically tested (Lynham, 2002). The scientific method is designed to test predictions. A prediction may be defined as a “truth statement” (Dubin, 1969, p. 166) related to the theoretical model. These truth statements are based on logic, and they form the basis for research.

Using logic, the prediction was built upon a syllogism. This study theorized that: (a) learning organizations use the Model II socio-cognitive systems learning process (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996); (b) the National Service Coalition (NSC) is a learning organization, meeting the criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008); (c) therefore, NSC uses the Model II socio-cognitive systems learning process (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Development of the research prediction: A syllogism. Adapted from Theory Building, by R. Dubin, 1969, p. 129. Copyright 1969 by The Free Press.](image-url)
Predictions are made by making “truth statements” (Dubin, 1969, p. 166) about outcomes, represented by values specified by the researcher for the units of analysis. Dubin (1969) described the process of establishing values for units of analysis as challenging. The researcher must distinguish between processes and outcomes. While processes represent the laws of interaction that link the units of analysis, the outcomes are based on the values of the units of analysis. The outcomes, therefore, provide the basis for the predictions. The predicted outcomes are measured, while the “laws of interaction are specified but not measured” (p. 189).

Dubin (1969) described three types of predictions, relating to: (a) units of analysis, (b) the persistence of a system state over time, or (c) the transition from one system state to another. With the first type, predictions reflect the projected values of units of analysis, with the unit values measured by analyzing adjacent units using the laws of interaction. With the second type, a prediction is made about a system state’s continuity, which is tested by measuring the values of all the system’s units. The third type is a prediction about the oscillation of the system from one state to another that again involves predictions about the values of all units of the system as they pass over the boundary of one system state into another (p. 173). For this study, the prediction may be classified as Dubin’s (1969) first type: projecting the value of units of analysis.

This study includes one prediction: As a learning organization, the National Service Coalition, uses the Model II socio-cognitive process, characterized by: (a) transparent values centered on wholeness, (b) productive, learned social behaviors, and (c) productive outcomes of learning and change, which are consistent with values of wholeness.

While the socio-cognitive systems learning model includes three system states, this study focused only on the Model II process and, embedded within each Model II unit of analysis, the system state of the cultural patterns of meaning and practice that flow bidirectionally between
individual and organization. This focus was based upon the research question: Which patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes are needed for an organization to be a learning organization? This study did not focus on the third system state, the Model I socio-cognitive systems learning process.

**Empirical Indicators**

Next in Dubin’s (1969) theory building process is identifying empirical indicators in order to measure the units of analysis. Two criteria may test the quality of empirical indicators. First, the process for identifying the unit values must be explicitly disclosed by the researcher to lay the groundwork for repeated studies. Second, repeated studies should demonstrate instrument reliability and inter-rater reliability. In keeping with these criteria, empirical indicators were identified for each unit of analysis (see Table 2 and Figure 3).

**Empirical Indicators by Unit**

**Model II values.** Model II values are characteristic of the complex unit type, comprised of multiple interwoven unit types. The values component represents an enumerative type, the espoused and real functions represent a relational type, and as a whole Model II values are context-based and may be absent in certain contexts, as indicative of an associative unit type. Because multiple units represent the distinct components when the unit is deconstructed, the unit type is considered complex, and care must be taken in identifying empirical indicators that adequately measure it (Dubin, 1969).

With Model II, espoused values and real values are consistent. This consistency is derived from testing assumptions. Therefore, testing assumptions served as an empirical indicator. In keeping with the complex unit type, absence of these values was also noted (Dubin, 1969).
### Table 2

**Methods for Measurement and Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Likert-scale data source</th>
<th>Qualitative data source*</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model II values</td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>Interview question #3</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, &amp; 14</td>
<td>The theory is supported if each empirical indicator meets both of the following criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a) ( \geq 75% ) of individuals indicate a four or five for each Likert response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Qualitative data is consistent overall with the Likert responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II learned</td>
<td>Including people to</td>
<td>Interview question #4a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 4b, &amp; 14</td>
<td>The theory is supported if each empirical indicator meets both of the following criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social behaviors</td>
<td>develop belongingness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a) ( \geq 75% ) of individuals indicate a four or five for each Likert response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inviting people to</td>
<td>Interview question #5a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 5b, &amp; 14</td>
<td>b) Qualitative data is consistent overall with the Likert responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>share their ideas and talents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, &amp; 14</td>
<td>The theory is supported if each empirical indicator meets both of the following criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>Interview question #6a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 6b, &amp; 14</td>
<td>a) ( \geq 75% ) of individuals indicate a four or five for each Likert response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>Interview question #7a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 7b, &amp; 14</td>
<td>b) Qualitative data is consistent overall with the Likert responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>Interview question #8a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 8b, &amp; 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>Interview question #9a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 9b, &amp; 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II outcomes</td>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>Interview question #10a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 10b, &amp; 14</td>
<td>The theory is supported if each empirical indicator meets both of the following criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Productive learning and change</td>
<td>Interview question #11a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 11b, &amp; 14</td>
<td>a) ( \geq 75% ) of individuals indicate a four or five for each Likert response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Interview question #12a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 12b, &amp; 14</td>
<td>b) Qualitative data is consistent overall with the Likert responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Interview question #13a</td>
<td>Interview questions #1, 2, 13b, &amp; 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In addition to the interview questions listed as qualitative data sources, the following data sources may produce qualitative data for any empirical indicator: direct observation and document review.
**Model II learned social behaviors.** As a unit type, Model II learned social behaviors constitute the associative unit type. The following empirical indicators were used to measure Model II learned social behaviors: (a) including people to develop belongingness, (b) inviting people to share their ideas and talents, (c) providing freedom to disagree, (d) engaging in open dialogue, (e) asking questions to seek understanding, (f) listening or observing to seek understanding, and (g) treating people with respect. Each of these empirical indicators was used to measure the degree of presence or the absence of Model II learned social behaviors, using Dubin's (1969) approach.

**Model II outcomes.** Model II outcome of wholeness may be categorized as the associative unit type. The following empirical indicators were used to measure the degree of presence, or the absence (Dubin, 1969), of the Model II outcome of wholeness: (a) problem resolution, (b) productive learning and change, (c) peace, and (d) trust.

**Embedding Empirical Indicators in the Prediction**

Embedding the empirical indicators within the prediction, this study predicted that learning organizations use the Model II socio-cognitive process, characterized by: (a) wholeness-oriented values, measured by the testing of assumptions in order to understand one's true self and other people; (b) evidence of the following learned social behaviors: including people to develop belongingness, inviting people to share their ideas and talents, providing freedom to disagree, engaging in open dialogue, asking questions to seek understanding, listening or observing to seek understanding, and treating people with respect; and (c) wholeness, as evidenced by the following outcomes: problem resolution, productive learning and change, peace, and trust.

The empirical indicators were embedded within the model (see Figure 3). This diagram served as the working model as the researcher developed the theory. A simplified version of the
Figure 3. Socio-cognitive systems learning model.

model was also developed to provide the public with lay-understanding of the essence of the theory (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Socio-cognitive systems learning model: Simplified version.
Hypotheses

Because hypotheses are not typically developed for positivistic case studies, this study will use a modified approach to Dubin’s (1969) process. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) defined a hypothesis as a prediction, derived from a theory or from speculation, about how two or more measured variables will be related to each other (p. 626). Hypotheses do not fit the process of case study research, which is designed to provide an in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon (p. 619). Rather than narrowing the examination to the relationship of two or more variables, case study research has a more holistic approach, rendering hypotheses irrelevant for this process. Therefore, this study will omit hypotheses and will, instead, test the prediction that the data derived from the case will support the socio-cognitive systems learning model.

This study proposes a socio-cognitive systems learning model as a tool for understanding, building upon, and applying Argyris’ (2000, 2004, 2006, 2010) theory. The units of analysis (see Table 2) are variables that interact to create the essence of the theory (Lynham, 2002). By examining the units of analysis (Dubin, 1969; Lynham, 2002), this model addresses both the what and the how of thinking (Oyserman & Lee, 2008, p. 326) through three system states (Dubin, 1969; Lynham, 2002): the Model I and Model II socio-cognitive processes, as well as the system’s mutual constitution (Adams & Markus, 2004; Akün et al., 2003; Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007), which is embedded within each unit of analysis of the Model I and Model II system states.

Empirical Testing

Dubin (1969) described a theory as a model of some segment of the observable world (p. 223). The researcher tests the model by testing the predictions that reflect the system depicted
in the model. Similarly, this study tested the prediction that the Model II socio-cognitive systems learning process is evident in a learning organization.

Methodology

**Positivistic case study.** The primary goal of this study was to develop an in-depth understanding of the socio-cognitive process used at a learning organization. Given the in-depth focus on a particular organization, a positivistic case study was appropriate to test this study's prediction (Crotty, 1998; Gall et al., 2003; Yin, 2009). Drawing largely from the methodological approach used by Argyris and Schön (1996), a case study was selected as the most appropriate methodology for examining systems learning within an organization. Unlike the case examined by Argyris and Schön, which was comprised of executives from a variety of organizations, the focus of this case study was a bounded case, comprised of staff members of a singular organization. The purpose of selecting participants from a bounded case, such as an organization, was to understand and explain how the system operates as a whole (Creswell, 2007; Dubin, 1969; Yin, 2009).

Using Yin’s (2009) approach, positivistic case study researchers examine the literature to develop a model or theory to explain a phenomenon as it occurs in context. The model is tested through empirical examination of a case. The results of the data analyses were then compared to the model to determine how the model was either supported or refuted and, ultimately, to identify new learning, thus adding to the body of knowledge.

Yin’s (2009) approach to positivistic case study is distinguished from interpretive case study both sequentially and philosophically. Whereas an interpretive case study builds the model as data are collected, a positivistic case study begins with a comprehensive review of the
literature, which is used to build the model. The model for the positivistic case study is tested after data are collected, by comparing the study’s findings to the model.

Yin’s (2009) approach to positivistic case study is applicable when no theory or model currently exists to explain a particular phenomenon as it occurs in a specific context. While this study was launched from an existing theory, Argyris’s (2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010) organization learning theory is largely misunderstood. To develop understanding of Argyris’s theory, the socio-cognitive systems learning process was built upon, integrating the cultural element, as well as diagrammed. Yin’s (2009) case study approach was appropriate for this study as it examined the model as it occurred in a specific context, within the bounded case of the NSC organization.

**Embedded single-case study design.** This study used an embedded single-case study design, defined as research of a single case that contains multiple subunits. An embedded single-case study design analyzes an organization’s practices by examining the practices of the staff members who comprise the organization (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). For this study, the organization served as the single case, and the organization’s staff members served as the multiple subunits. The researcher sought to understand each participating staff member in order to better understand the organization as a whole.

Yin (2009) cautioned against a common error made by researchers using an embedded single-case study design. This error occurs when the researcher focuses exclusively on the individual-level data and neglects to focus on the aggregate data that explain the case (e.g., organization) as a whole (Yin, 2009). For this study, the design will include both: (a) the individual-level analysis of each team member participating in the study and (b) the aggregate analysis of team member data in order to analyze the organization as a whole.
Site

The National Service Coalition is a nationwide service agency that seeks to meet the needs of a specific population bound by a common lived experience, as well as for their families. The organization was officially formed in 2012 by a client activist, who for years had provided client services on an informal basis to clients and their family members who contacted her by word of mouth, through her broad professional network, legislators, and civic organizations. For confidentiality purposes, an organization pseudonym was used in this research, and the specific focus of the service agency was not disclosed. Pseudonyms were also used for the team member names.

Learning organization status. A learning organization was necessary as the site for this case study, in order to test the patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes that are needed for an organization to be a learning organization. Argyris and Schön (1996) defined such organization learning as the ŕability to see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (p. xix).

Operationalizing this definition, this study identified a learning organization as demonstrating the three criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008): (a) ŕa supportive learning environment (p. 111) that provides ŕpsychological safety, appreciation of differences, openness to new ideas, and time for reflection (p. 112), (b) learning opportunities built into work processes, through ŕexperimentation, information collection, analysis, education and training, and information transfer (p. 113), and (c) leadership that models learning by welcoming input and listening.
Upon preliminary assessment of its status as a learning organization, the National Service Coalition was selected as the case for this study. To test this preliminary assessment, the researcher conducted a focus group at the site before proceeding with the case study. The focus group questions were designed to test the learning organization criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008; see Table 3). Only after these criteria were established during the focus group, confirming NSC as a learning organization, the researcher proceeded with the case study. The protocol and focus group questions are provided in Appendix A. Per the protocol, if the site did not meet the learning organization criteria as demonstrated through the focus group, the researcher would have terminated the case study research at this site.

Table 3

*Case Study Prerequisite: Confirmation of Learning Organization Criteria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning organization criterion</th>
<th>Criterion source</th>
<th>Qualitative source*</th>
<th>Criterion analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive learning environment</td>
<td>Focus group question #2</td>
<td>a) Focus group question #1 b) Direct observation</td>
<td>The case is confirmed as a learning organization if each empirical criterion meets both of the following criteria: a) ≥ 75% of individuals indicate a four or five for each Likert-scale response b) Qualitative data is consistent overall with the responses to Likert questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning opportunity built into work process</td>
<td>Focus group question #3</td>
<td>a) Focus group question #1 b) Direct observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership that seeks to learn</td>
<td>Focus group question #4</td>
<td>a) Focus group question #1 b) Direct observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Qualitative data sources may produce data for some, but not all, learning organization criteria.
Demographics

The case is comprised of the nine staff members of the National Service Coalition (NSC Director, personal communication, February 7, 2013). Seven work full-time, and two work part-time. Eight work on-site at the organization headquarters, and one typically works off-site.

All staff members are also members of the population or family members of the population that the NSC serves (NSC Director, personal communication, February 7, 2013). Eight team members are female, and one is male. Based on visual observation, the demographics include representation of the Baby Boomer Generation and Generations X and Y. Also based on visual observation, the majority of the team appears to be white.

NSC relies on donations, grants, and fundraising and does not currently have a payroll (NSC Director, personal communication, February 7, 2013). All staff members are either volunteers or paid externally through grants. Seven staff members' positions are funded through grants funded by: the U.S. Department of Labor, AmeriCorps, and AmeriCorps VISTA.

Validity

Construct validity. Construct validity is defined as the extent to which the research processes are appropriate for the concepts selected for the research. A study demonstrating construct validity is one whose variables or constructs used to carry out the study are consistent with the concepts that initiated the study. The research design is largely responsible for whether or not such consistency is achieved (Gall et al., 2003; McMillan, 2008; Yin, 2009). Research strategies to bolster construct validity include providing a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009) and triangulating sources (Gall et al., 2003; Yin, 2009).

Chain of evidence. This study sought to demonstrate construct validity by providing a chain of evidence through standardized research processes (Dubin, 1969; Gall et al., 2003;
These standard research processes include: the linear-analytic structure for research writing (Yin, 2009), Dubin’s (1969) theory building and testing process, and Yin’s (2009) positivistic case study approach, which calls for a chain of logic to demonstrate why the data do or do not support the theory.

First, this study used a linear-analytic structure for research writing. This structure describes the standardized layout for research papers and journal articles in order to provide a sequential presentation of the chain of evidence. The linear-analytic structure began with a research question, followed by a review of the literature. The study’s empirical testing process was detailed in the methodology section, expanding on the research design and methods. Next, a description of the results of the data were shared, followed by discussion, which summarized the findings by tying the results of the study to the body of knowledge on the topic, as discovered through the literature review (Yin, 2009).

In addition to the linear-analytic structure, a chain of evidence was provided through a standardized theory building structure (Yin, 2009). This study used Dubin’s (1969) eight-step process for theory development. The first four steps focused on theory building, while the last four steps focused on empirical testing. Dubin’s standardized approach was applied to this study’s process of using logic to develop the socio-cognitive systems learning model: (a) The initial research concepts formed the units of analysis. (b) The relationships between those units of analysis were examined to identify the laws of interaction. (c) The boundaries were identified to determine the limits within which the theory holds true. (d) The system states were theorized by using logic to establish how the units of analysis simultaneously function within the system across time. Next, this study applied Dubin’s approach to empirical testing, the last four steps of
the theory development process: (e) developing predictions, (f) identifying empirical indicators to test the predictions, (g) developing hypotheses, and (h) testing the theory (Lynham, 2002).

Dubin’s (1969) theory development process applies to a variety of positivistic methodologies. Because this research was specifically a positivistic case study, Yin’s (2009) approach for case study research design and methods was also integrated in this study. Yin’s case study approach, Dubin’s (1969) theory development process, and the linear-analytic structure for research writing were all integrated into this study in order to demonstrate construct validity by establishing a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009).

**Triangulation.** Another strategy for establishing construct validity is triangulation. Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence in order to untangle real and espoused phenomena. The four types are: triangulation of data sources, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methods triangulation (Patton, 1999, 2002, as cited in Yin, 2009). This study used methods triangulation to analyze and compare the quantitative data (i.e., the Likert responses) with the qualitative data (i.e., interview narratives, direct observation, document review) in order to identify the degree of data consistency between methods. Triangulation of data sources was also integrated into the study to compare and analyze the qualitative data from different sources—the interview narratives, direct observation, and document review—in order to corroborate the data. Through triangulation, the researcher generated increased confidence that the findings reflect the concepts that were intended to be measured. In this way, construct validity was bolstered (Gall et al., 2003; Patton, 1999; Yin, 2009).

**Internal validity.** Internal validity is the degree to which the researcher establishes a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships (Yin, 2009, p. 40). To demonstrate internal validity,
the researcher must untangle the relationships between variables in order to identify the causal relationship between the variables, as well as identify extraneous variables that should be excluded from attribution of the causal relationship. Internal validity is also demonstrated by ruling out rival theories (McMillan, 2008; Gall et al., 2003; Yin, 2009). This study sought to establish internal validity by untangling espoused from real values, separating spurious variables from valid constructs.

Logic model. This was an explanatory study, which sought to understand and explain the Model II socio-cognitive process of organization learning. Because the socio-cognitive systems learning model is comprised of sequential events, a logic model is an appropriate technique for evaluating internal validity. Each event depicted in the theory serves as a dependent variable that is reliant upon the preceding event (i.e., the independent variable). While serving as a dependent variable to the previous event, each variable also serves as an independent variable to the event that succeeds it. In this way, the theory depicts a "complex chain of events" which are] staged in repeated cause-effect-cause-effect patterns (Yin, 2009, p. 149).

A logic model is an analytic tool that is used to compare each event’s theoretical predictions with the empirical findings related to that event (Yin, 2009). For this study, a logic model was used, comparing and contrasting each unit of analysis with the corresponding empirical findings that either supported or refuted the predictions.

External validity. External validity refers to the domain or the boundaries within which the study’s findings can be generalized (Gall et al., 2003; McMillan, 2008; Yin, 2009). Positivistic case studies do not seek statistical generalizability (Yin, 2009), which projects the findings from a study’s participant sample to its larger population (McMillan, 2008). Instead, positivistic case studies seek analytic generalizability. A prerequisite goal of the research process
is to acquire an in-depth understanding of the case. This in-depth understanding, derived from the research data, is used to test the predictions based on the theory. In analytic generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory (Yin, 2009, p. 43).

Multiple-case studies establish analytic generalization through replication logic, using cases that have similar boundary-determining criteria. In contrast, a single-case study establishes analytic generalization by comparing the study findings to the theory, with particular focus on the domain described in the theory building portion of the research (Dubin, 1969; Yin, 2009).

Contributing to analytic generalizability, Dubin’s (1969) approach emphasizes careful selection of the boundary-determining criteria that define the case (Lynham, 2002). As described in the theory building portion of this research, this study’s case was a single organization. This study sought to understand and explain the socio-cognitive process of NSC’s organization culture. This study did not attempt to generalize beyond the bounds of the case. Future studies are recommended to use replication logic to test whether the socio-cognitive systems learning model applies to other cases, such as other organizations or other specific social systems (Yin, 2009).

**Reliability**

Reliability is defined as the degree to which repetition of a study will produce the same results (Gall et al., 2003; Yin, 2009). While replication logic is used to demonstrate external validity by duplicating a study’s methodology and methods with cases that are different from the one used in the original study (McMillan, 2008; Yin, 2009), reliability is demonstrated by repeating the study using the same case. In order for future, repeated studies to duplicate the
interview process and measure reliability, this study provided a detailed description of the case study protocol, as recommended by Yin (2009).

**Methods**

This study tested the prediction that the National Service Coalition is a learning organization, demonstrating the patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes depicted in the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Data were collected through four methods: interviews, questionnaire, direct observation, and document review. A listing of this study’s units of analysis, empirical indicators, data sources, and data analyses is provided in Table 2.

**Interviews.** Interviews served as this study’s primary source of data. The interview questions were designed to elicit rich narratives that collectively tell the story of the NSC’s culture as a learning organization. Abbreviated vignettes were provided to tell this story (Yin, 2009). The narrative reflects a special practice that should be used more frequently: to have case study investigators compose open-ended answers to the questions in the case study protocol (Yin, 2009, p. 121). By triangulating the narrative data with the data derived from other methods (Gall et al., 2003; Yin, 2009), valid interpretations may be drawn (Gall et al., 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Yin, 2009). This study asked open-ended interview questions, inviting narrative responses as recommended by Yin (2009).

The interview method was adapted from the methods used by Argyris and Schön (1996) and later by Argyris (2004, 2010). In order to untangle real values from espoused values, Argyris and Schön developed a questionnaire with questions intentionally designed to bypass the espoused values and defensive tendencies that are characteristic of the Model I socio-cognitive process. However, while Argyris’s research participants were executives from a variety of corporations, this study was a single-case study that sought to understand and explain the values,
behavior, and outcomes within the bounds of a single organization, from a systems perspective. Also unlike Argyris’s (2004, 2010) approach, the interviews included Likert-scale questions to measure the empirical indicators. Per the interview protocol (see Appendix B), the researcher had the freedom to follow-up the Likert-scale responses with probing, open-ended questions in order to elicit explanation for the individual’s Likert-scale rating. The interview was designed to be succinct, and the interview questions were designed to directly target the empirical indicators. In contrast, current research interviews are often too long and filled with idle chatter. If one knows what to ask for, why one is asking, and how to ask, one can conduct short interviews that are rich in meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 162). The interview questions were provided as part of the interview protocol.

**Questionnaire.** The Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire was developed to test the empirical indicator “freedom to disagree” for Model II learned social behaviors (see Table 2). The questionnaire asked: If you disagreed with a NSC colleague, how comfortable would you be: (a) to tell him/her that you disagreed and (b) to openly discuss your thoughts and ideas with him/her? Beneath this question on the questionnaire, the name and job title of each NSC staff member was listed. Respondents were asked to rate their comfort level to disagree with each NSC colleague on a five-point Likert scale (e.g., 1, very uncomfortable; 5, very comfortable) or to indicate “N/A” if they had not had the opportunity to work with that staff member, as a portion of staff members work part-time or work off-site. The questionnaire instructed, “When you get to your name, please answer how comfortable you think your NSC colleagues are: (a) to tell you that they disagree with you and (b) to openly discuss their thoughts and ideas with you.” The protocol is provided in Appendix C, and the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire is provided in Appendix D.
Confidentiality. A confidentiality statement was printed on the questionnaire. After the researcher explained the instructions, the researcher left the room to allow privacy for the respondent to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were instructed to place the completed questionnaire in an envelope provided, to seal the individual envelope, and to slide it through the slit of a sealed box. The purpose of this approach was to ensure anonymity, without the researcher knowing who completed each questionnaire. Respondents were assured that no names would be used with the reporting of the “freedom to disagree” empirical indicator.

Direct observation. In addition to the interview responses, nonverbal cues provide data that may be used for triangulation of data sources (Patton, 1999, 2002, as cited in Yin, 2009). Direct observation is the method for collecting data on nonverbal behavior. This method requires active listening, with the interviewer listening to the spoken words and observing the tone and other nonverbal cues (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Direct observations were recorded by the interviewer as the participant responded to the interview questions. In addition to recording the participant’s responses, the interviewer noted any observations about the participant’s nonverbal behavior. General observations were recorded either during or immediately following the interview. Data gathered through direct observation were analyzed by categorizing the observations according to the empirical indicators that they informed.

Document review. Documents serve as important cultural artifacts, reflecting the espoused values of the organization (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, in Adams & Markus, 2004; Schein, 2004, 2009). Depending on the documents available from the organization, the review of documents may provide data about the organization culture and espoused values. These documents included: the organization overview and objectives, mission statement, organization
charter, staff listing, listing of board members, photographs, and information about NSC headquarters. Each of these documents was obtained from the NSC web site. Data gathered through document review were analyzed by categorizing the data according to the empirical indicators they inform and comparing them to the qualitative data gleaned from interviews and direct observation. In this way, document review also served as a method for triangulation of data sources.

**Data Collection Process**

**Participant selection.** Typically with a case study, the case serves as the participant, making the sampling process unnecessary. However, with an embedded single-case study design, subunits comprising the case are studied. For this study, NSC staff members served as the embedded subunits for analysis of the case. Participants who provide the embedded subunit data may be selected through statistical sampling methods (McClintock, 1985, as cited by Yin, 2009). However, because NSC is a small organization with less than 20 staff members, all staff members were invited to participate in the study. Therefore, sampling methods were not used.

**Participant invitation.** The researcher attended a NSC staff meeting to brief staff members on the study and invite them to participate. A recruitment script was used to guide the researcher’s presentation at the staff meeting (see Appendix E). As indicated in the recruitment script, an informed consent form was provided. Any staff members who wished to participate indicated their interest by signing the informed consent form (see Appendix F), a requirement for participation. A response rate of 75-percent was expected.

**Data collection method.** An interview protocol (see Appendix B) was developed to bolster reliability. The protocol was intended to be semi-structured, allowing the freedom to ask follow-up questions for clarification or for further information. Interview length varied
depending on the talkativeness of the participant. Overall, each interview was estimated to last about one hour. In the informed consent form, participants were notified that the interviews would be audio-recorded.

In addition to the interview responses, direct observation provided data for the study. During the course of the interview, the researcher recorded direct observations about nonverbal behavior, as well as notes from the participant’s interview responses.

Following the interview, each participant completed the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire. The protocol described the data collection method, which was designed to support participant anonymity (see Appendices C and D).

Finally, document review was used as a vehicle for triangulation of data sources. The documents reviewed were all gathered from NSC’s web site.

**Data Analysis**

An advantage of case study research is that the researcher may bring a case to life in a way that is not possible using the statistical methods of quantitative research (Gall et al., 2003, p. 472). Yin (2009) also noted the challenge of case study research, positing that the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies (p. 127). This study’s intent was to bring to life NSC’s story as a learning organization, using an approach that was grounded in data with a clear plan for data analysis. As recommended by Yin, this study’s approach to data analysis began with categorizing the data as they related to empirical indicators. The interview responses to Likert questions were also categorized by empirical indicator (see Table 2). The open-ended interview questions, direct observation, and document review data were categorized according to the empirical indicators they informed. The qualitative, narrative data were used to explain the Likert responses and bring
the case to life by telling the organization’s story. The qualitative, narrative data also served to demonstrate construct validity by contributing to both methods triangulation and triangulation of data sources (Patton, 1999, 2002, as cited in Yin, 2009).

For the case as a whole, the socio-cognitive systems learning theory was supported if each empirical indicator for the Model II units of analysis met the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five for each Likert-scale response and (b) any qualitative data were consistent overall with the Likert responses.

Any gaps between the qualitative data and responses to Likert questions were noted. The researcher asked probing, follow-up questions to examine any inconsistencies. Triangulation was used to untangle real phenomena from those that were espoused. Data were triangulated to identify any gaps or inconsistencies between the responses of different participants. Methods were triangulated to identify any gaps or inconsistencies between interview responses, questionnaire responses, direct observations, and document review.

The goal was to gather focused data in order for meaningful patterns to emerge during data analyses. Yin (2009) recommended creating a category matrix to organize the narrative data. For this study, the table containing the units of analyses, empirical indicators, data sources, and data analysis approaches (see Table 2) served as the category matrix recommended by Yin. He also recommended describing such patterns through descriptive statistics, such as central tendencies and ranges.

This approach relied on the theoretical prediction based on the Model II process included in the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Yin described the reliance on theoretical prediction as “the first and most preferred strategy” (p. 130) for case study data analysis. Data were compared against the theory to determine if the theory was supported.
Debriefing

Following the study, the researcher met with the NSC Director on-site at the organization headquarters. The debriefing session provided the opportunity for the researcher to present the research findings to the Director. The debriefing also provided opportunity for the Director to ask questions and, if necessary, to challenge the interpretations or conclusions. As recommended by Creswell (2007), notes were taken at the debriefing session, so the researcher would have the opportunity to review any interpretations challenged by the Director to determine if the data supported the interpretation or if any adjustments were warranted. However, in this case, no interpretations were challenged by the Director.

At the debriefing, the Director was presented with the option to use the organization’s real name or a pseudonym in the research report. The Director opted to use a pseudonym for the organization for confidentiality.

Delimitations

As a sense-making tool for real-world processes, the theory must disclose the limits within which the theory holds true. Argyris (2000) applied his theory primarily to the workplace. Similarly, this study was designed to understand and explain organization learning by applying the socio-cognitive systems learning model to NSC, an organization that fit the identified criteria to qualify as a learning organization. Ultimately, this study was designed to test the patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes at NSC in order to determine if the patterns described by the theory were supported.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

To test the socio-cognitive systems learning model, this positivistic case study analyzed the presence of the Model II socio-cognitive process within a learning organization. This study sought to understand and explain NSC’s patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes and to compare them to the Model II process in order to test the theory.

Focus Group: Learning Organization Confirmation

Confirming NSC’s status as a learning organization was a prerequisite to the study. A focus group was conducted to confirm the learning organization criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008; see Table 3). Per the protocol (see Appendix A), the focus group included five NSC team members. All three criteria were supported (see Table 4), establishing NSC as a learning organization.

Response Rate

After NSC’s status as a learning organization was confirmed, the study proceeded. The researcher interviewed nine team members, a 100-percent response rate of all regular team members. Four individuals who volunteer only sporadically, on an ad hoc basis, were not included in the study because they are not familiar with the NSC team dynamics. Experience with the team dynamics was essential to establish NSC’s patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes.
Table 4

Focus Group Results: Learning Organization Criteria Supported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning organization criterion</th>
<th>Criterion analysis</th>
<th>Learning organization status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive learning environment</td>
<td>• Information and education are part of NSC’s mission.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To serve clients and families, staff members are provided continual learning opportunities: staff collaboration and e-learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Researcher observations: collegial, laughter, pointed out each other’s complementary areas of expertise and strengths.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning opportunity built into work process</td>
<td>0% 100% 100%</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Every time someone talks to you, you learn.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “We learn by pursuing resources for clients and family members, channeling our energies in the areas they need help.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Director said, “Every day, we learn something.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Director said, “You find the things that people enjoy.” This informs their job descriptions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership that seeks to learn</td>
<td>0% 100% 100%</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Without (the Director) being that way, NSC wouldn’t be here.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “...And we wouldn’t know our own potential.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “She is always willing to talk.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Director said, “I’m still learning.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Director said the Board also welcomes input and listens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Data

The Director provided demographic data to better understand NSC, the case study organization. The demographic data categorized: the number of work hours per week and whether the staff position was grant-funded or volunteer (see Table 5). The data were itemized by staff member sex. Because the organization is in its infancy, established just eight months ago, tenure with the organization was not noted. All team members joined NSC shortly after its opening.

Table 5

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Work schedule</th>
<th>Staff category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 hours/week</td>
<td>Grant-funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant Roles

The nine regular staff members who participated include: the Director; the Executive Assistant; four individuals who serve dual roles as Case Advocates and Educators, each having a distinct specialty area for serving clients and their family members; a Research and Case Advocacy Support Specialist; a Receptionist; and an Internal Consultant who serves as an executive advisor to the Director and provides training for the team.
Data Analysis and Reporting

This study had an embedded single-case design, as defined by Yin (2009). For this reason, the data were first analyzed individually for each team member. These data were then analyzed in aggregate to understand and explain the case of the NSC organization as a whole.

Data analyses are presented as follows: individual team member’s Likert responses and qualitative data from the interviews, data from the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire, aggregate quantitative data from the team member interviews and the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire, and aggregate narrative data categorized by empirical indicator. The narrative data is a compilation of vignettes provided by team member interviews, along with qualitative data from direct observation and document review.

Team Member Data

Interview Data by Empirical Indicator

For individual team members, the Likert response data were triangulated with qualitative data to provide meaning for each empirical indicator for each respondent (see Tables 6-14).

Table 6

*Team Member 1: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
<th>Qualitative response: Meaning of empirical indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model II values</td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>#3 4</td>
<td>Six months ago was the pinnacle of excitement. I would have said 'agree.' Three months ago (during a crisis period, marked by escalating tension among staff), I would have said 'disagree.' Now... now back up to 'agree.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Model II values*

*Testing assumptions*

*Data analysis*

*Qualitative response: Meaning of empirical indicator*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model II learned social behaviors</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model II outcomes</td>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree &amp; Discuss Questionnaire</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>Being able to work with others, even when we disagree. That’s a challenge to maintain that relationship.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
<td>Since we are a referral (based) non-profit, that is encouraged because the information that each of us has is very valuable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Establishes trust and allows me to be better in my job. Because the time you spend worrying about (lack of trust distracts you from doing your job well). It makes you worry: How do I talk to this person about it? What are they going to say?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six months ago, I would have said strongly agree. Three months ago, I would have said disagree. If I know there are still some people who are unhappy. Hmmm... I'm going to have to say neither agree nor disagree.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning. I think when there’s a relationship, especially with what we do at NSC, learning about that other person is like searching for resources. Those resources are only as good as those connections that you make. Either with team members or with other people outside of NSC.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agree) they do (listen). We all want to find out what people are doing) how, what, when, why. For all different reasons) We have three types of personalities here: (1) jockeying for position, (2) assertive, (3) quiet watchers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That’s how I hope we can come closer together) There are times when we need help being assertive, taking the lead, or being quiet and listening. And that’s even funny with the mindset (of having a professional background in organizations with tall hierarchy structures). Usually you have a very strict chain-of-command.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being part of a team. That’s why I work so hard on interpersonal relationships here and (outside of NSC). Accepting someone else’s boundaries. Being as professional as possible. I try to give people space even if they don’t have their own office. I walk up to the person, sit down, and wait to be recognized because they’re working) I try to be very conscious of that.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That we can let it go and get back to what we’re here to do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to get past the problem and focus on the work, the clients and families, because that’s my #1 priority. As long as we can maintain that relationship, I’m fine.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with whatever happened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Productive learning and change</th>
<th>#11a-b</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lot of things. You need a lot of challenges, not always positive, to understand your own convictions. Even when I see other people fired up, I like to see their convictions and their passion. It's a good thing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We're on the border of mending (following the recent staff transition). We're all good people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peace</th>
<th>#12a-b</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It carries into my personal life, just as some people's personal lives carry into their job. The transition from work to home is easy. And the transition from home to work is easy. I don't have to cut myself off from either. It's not a struggle.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>#13a-b</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety. A safety net. Builds self-esteem. Allows you to use your resources to do other things: learning, wanting to (improve job skills). Without all the negativity, it frees you up to do other things. I trust them at NSC. I don't know much of them outside (of work). Some I do. If you're like-minded, you're drawn to each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

**Team Member 2: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data source</strong></td>
<td><strong>Likert response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Qualitative response:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II values</strong></td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>#3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Including people to develop belongingness</strong></td>
<td>#4a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II learned social behaviors</strong></td>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
<td>#5a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree &amp; Discuss Questionnaire</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II outcomes</td>
<td>#</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>#6a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>#7a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>#8a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>#9a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>#10a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive learning and change</td>
<td>#11a-b</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>#12a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>#13a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Be able to listen to the other person and give your point-of-view. I hope they all (are able to engage in open and honest conversation). Basically, we're all adults, so we should not stomp our feet and scream. Be able to listen to the other person and give your point-of-view. Everybody has a point-of-view. It's how you address it, whether it starts a hassle.

- You can see their point-of-view from that's where their logic is coming from. Sometimes after you've heard that, it changes your perspective.

- Everyone (deserves to be treated with respect). Everyone brings something to the table. At NSC, we treat each other with respect pretty much all the time. No one here thinks they're smarter than anyone else. Even with (a certain colleague's) extensive knowledge, (that colleague) has never talked down to anyone or made you feel like you were stupid.

- Talking things out to solve the problem. I didn't always agree with (the how the recent staffing transition played out). I hoped that we could have all talked it out. Both of them (the staff members who left) had such great ideas. And I don't know the whole story, so I can't make a just call.

- Working things out and moving forward. I would say a right now. I would have hoped for (the two staff members who recently left) that they could have worked it out. With a new organization, I am concerned about the possibility of) negative publicity (due to hard feelings).

- Being relaxed when you come to work. You want to come to work. Have a good outlook about the whole thing. That you made a good choice about taking the job. No one wants to work where there's friction all the time. I don't like friction.

- Like the old (saying goes), they've got your back.

- I know I could go to any of these people even at home and they would give me some feedback. You might have a bad day, but 90% of the time, it's positive. If you are having a bad day, they don't dig at you either. They let you get through the day. If I didn't trust them, I wouldn't want to be here.
### Table 8

**Team Member 3: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Empirical Indicator</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II Values</strong></td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>Data source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>#3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
<td>#4a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II Learned Social Behaviors</strong></td>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree &amp; Discuss Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>#6a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>#7a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>#8a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>#9a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>#10a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Productive learning and change</td>
<td>#11a-b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Depends on the situation (as to whether we experience productive learning and change at NSC).

That I can come to work and not worry about: Can I concentrate on NSC work, rather than concentrate on personal issues? The goal is to help clients (not to be distracted by interpersonal problems with coworkers).

That I don’t have my guard up. We don’t do politics. We crib (i.e., joke, kid) each other to death.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9</th>
<th>Team Member 4: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit of analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Empirical indicator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II values</td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II learned social behaviors</td>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Treating people with respect #9a-b 4

Giving people your full attention. Currently, I think it's better than what it was. One of the things that made me upset was (a NSC colleague) bringing a cell phone into (staff) meetings and laughing at a text during the meeting while another person was talking. The Director asked her to put it away, but she said, "I was listening." (The Director) said, "You weren't listening." Body language. (Based on body language, it was clear she wasn't listening to the person talking. She was paying attention to incoming text messages.)

Problem resolution #10a-b 4

We definitely try. (Paraphrased:) I think the two staff members leaving was the only way to resolve the problems we were having. The staff members didn't seem receptive to talking things through, being courteous of other people, and working things out.

Productive learning and change #11a-b 4

Ultimately, I would agree. That when people disagree at NSC, it prompts discussion that results in productive learning and change.

Peace #12a-b 4

I do feel at peace with many of them. There still a little weariness with some of them. For the most part, I agree. I wouldn't have that weariness if not for the (strained) relationships (that people had with the staff members) who are no longer here and the relationships with some of the people here. I can't let my guard down yet. I don't want to be blind-sided again.

Model II outcomes

Trust #13a-b 4

Trust means that (the Director) can give an assignment, and someone will fulfill that assignment. That (people) will do the right thing, following the best interests of NSC. Empowering people.

Probably more so (more trust) than what I don't have. I have good relationships with some.

When I talk with (a specific NSC colleague), if we have a difference of opinion, I say, "Explain to me why." We have a good relationship. We want to see each other's perspective. Trust each other to disagree, to ask questions and listen to others' points-of-view.

Table 10

Team Member 5: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Likert response</th>
<th>Qualitative response: Meaning of empirical indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model II values</td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II learned social behaviors</td>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>Each person having a niche that they fill. ð† have a niche that I fill, and I think I fill it pretty well. ð† not that ð†n perfect because ð†n still learning and growing in the position. ð†n an ever-changing entity (i.e., NSC), and it will continue to grow and develop, as any organization does in its first couple years. ð†</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
<td>#4a-b 5</td>
<td>ð†Being an active participant. Sometimes offering those talents up. Sometimes people seek those talents out. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree &amp; Discuss Questionnaire</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>#6a-b 4</td>
<td>ð†Sitting down and discussing the issue and hopefully coming to a peaceful resolution. I have yet to see it any other way. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>#7a-b 4</td>
<td>ð†Again, meaningful conversation plays into that. People are willing to sit down and openly discuss those differences and seek that resolution. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>#8a-b 4</td>
<td>ð†My dad always said, ð† smart man knows when to speak, but a wise man knows when to listen. ð† He was a wise man. I try to be wise (like that), too. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>#9a-b 5</td>
<td>ð†Treating people like you like to be treated. And I think that ð† true of all of us. (That we treat people like we like to be treated.) We do a pretty good job of that. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>#10a-b 4</td>
<td>ð†Meaningful dialogue. Moving past whatever issue may have been. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive learning and change</td>
<td>#11a-b 4</td>
<td>ð†We’ve had a couple (staff members leave) here, and that ð† probably created some hard feelings with some of the employees. We’ve certainly had discussions about that. It ð† one of those issues for me personally, I understand. When you throw all these people together with a new organization, some of those personalities... (some people may leave.) People move past that. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>#12a-b 4</td>
<td>ð†Think at the end of the day, we’re all friends. We’re all family. Because of the smallness of the organization and the proximity of where we are and what we do. At the end of the day, for me personally, there’s a peace. I just don’t let the little things bother me. ð†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>#13a-b 4</td>
<td>ð†Trust for me is a huge issue. And that comes from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

*Team Member 6: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
<th>Likert response</th>
<th>Qualitative response: Meaning of empirical indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model II values</td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>To be included with the meetings and with everything. Because it’s confidential information from clients and families, I’m not privy to information. (Colleagues may talk about those issues.) Because of my position, I feel left out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>#4a-b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Invited in decision-making. Welcome ideas. Because of my position, I (usually) not included in decision-making, but when I am included, they welcome my ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree &amp; Discuss Questionnaire</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II learned social behaviors</td>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>#6a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Talking about the different things that happen. Like if we have an event: what could be different, what could be the same, what needs to be worked on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>#7a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>If there’s something we don’t know or need to know, we ask. I don’t think anybody holds back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>#8a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Listening. Having a good rapport. I think we have such a rapport between us, asking and listening and conversation is very good here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>#9a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Respect is almost mandatory, since we’re a confidential environment. We need to respect the clients, the families, each other. That’s just the policy. It’s what needs to be done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model II outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Likert response</th>
<th>Qualitative response: Meaning of empirical indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>#10a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;There is no tension here, so I'm assuming that if there had been conflict, it has been resolved.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive learning and change</td>
<td>#11a-b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Since we don't know why the two (staff members) left, other than (the Director) saying it didn't have anything to do with me, I would say disagree.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>#12a-b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Work together well. Respect each other. Friendship. We work together well, and we respect each other, but in harmony? I'm not sure. We are work partners, not so much friends. I look at harmony as friendship. They might have that because they work together more but I don't because of my position.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>#13a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;That comes with respect. You respect them. They respect you. We have a very good rapport.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

**Team Member 7: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Likert response</th>
<th>Qualitative response: Meaning of empirical indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model II values</td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>#4a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;To me, it means that we have some common experiential knowledge. We share some of the same values. We are passionate about the same causes.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
<td>#5a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;It means my input is regularly solicited. I can (become involved) in areas where I personally think I have something to contribute.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model II learned social behaviors</td>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree &amp; Discuss Questionnaire</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>#6a-b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;I would say it means that the conversation happens within a reasonable timeframe and that it happens after the individuals have processed (the situation). Then they directly talk to the people it involves. And they haven't talked to other people until the issue has been (addressed with those directly involved).&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>#7a-b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;I think it has a lot to do with the language we use, particularly when it might be a disagreement. I think it involves active listening: so what I hear you saying is? Indicates understanding.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>#8a-b</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| "I think the basic component of it is not interrupting. Letting someone finish (her) thought, even if you realize that you disagree. You're more concerned about understanding that other person, rather than being understood."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treating people with respect</th>
<th>#9a-b</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "I think it means making a genuine attempt to appreciate differences. To recognize individual values, whether they're the same as yours or not, to give people the benefit of the doubt, to be inclusive when it's appropriate. I think those are some of the hallmarks of respect."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem resolution</th>
<th>#10a-b</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "I think it means having an open discussion about the issue. I think that it means accepting the outcome, and I think it means that a relationship isn't negatively affected by the outcome, regardless whether the outcome favors one party or it's hard for both parties."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model II outcomes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Model II values   | Understanding assumptions | #3 | 4 | "For me, that depends on the person. (At NSC): almost agree, almost strongly agree."
| Model II learned social behaviors | Understanding | #4a-b | 5 | "Coming here to me was like coming home. I believe strongly in the mission and the need for the people NSC serves. I feel a personal connection to the mission." |

Table 13

*Team Member 8: Interview Data Analysis by Empirical Indicator*
| Inviting people to share their ideas and talents | 5 | “What I love about my job is pretty much everything.”
“People ask for my help.” |
<p>| Providing freedom to disagree | N/A | N/A |
| Engaging in open dialogue | 2 | “Hasn’t been as much here. Might improve when people move on who don’t enjoy it here.” |
| Asking questions to seek understanding | 4 | “Share my ideas. Share my point-of-view. Feel confident that I can share: feel this way because…” |
| Listening or observing to seek understanding | 2 | “Active listening isn’t good in general. Not just at NSC…” |
| Treating people with respect | 4 | “Having a good opinion about other people, which shows through in the way they are treated.” |
| Problem resolution | 4 | “This is a tough one. We’ve had our bumps. Sometimes (a colleague) and I have just agreed to disagree.” |
| Productive learning and change | 4 | “Because of the conflicts between (a colleague) and me, I used them as an opportunity to do some self-reflection. I have contributed (to the problem). Not giving (the colleague) my full attention when I’ve been overwhelmed (with the work). She might have felt disrespected.” |
| Peace | 4 | “Acceptance. Personal growth. Guess I am at peace. I have done those self-reflections. Done what I thought I could do. I think (my colleague) and I could have gone (awork project) if we could have worked together better. I feel like I’ve grown, so I think I’m at peace. It’s good to reflect and to think about how people perceive what I’m saying or what I’m doing.” |
| Trust | 4 | “Serving and being a resource for other people. Being experts in their areas. I trust them for that, and I tell them that. I told (a colleague) the other day, ‘I appreciate what you do. Her wisdom. That what I respect and admire about everyone at NSC. They’ve been in the trenches in a lot of ways, and they’re still willing to come to a place like NSC to serve.’” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
<th>Qualitative response: Meaning of empirical indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model II values</td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>#3 4</td>
<td>Fit describe interesting. I don’t know how you can test your assumptions without talking to other people, which leads people to jump to conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>#4a-b 5</td>
<td>Feeling accepted. Feeling like I don’t have to pretend to be someone I’m not in order to fit in. It took time to feel comfortable, to feel like I could be myself. That’s been that way in any job I’ve ever had. Thrown in with a bunch of strangers. Need to feel things out. I feel accepted by everyone on staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
<td>#5a-b 5</td>
<td>Fit means that I’m valuable, that someone would want to know my ideas, what I have to say, what I think. It puts value on me as a person. The fact that they come to me because I have talents (in areas) that they don’t build me up as well. Knowing I have this thing that another person doesn’t have, and they come to me in that area. And I get to share it. Using talents to build other people up, so they build their talents as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>Freedom to Disagree &amp; Discuss Questionnaire</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>#6a-b 4</td>
<td>If I feel like there’s any conflict if anyone says something, and something inside of me says I just don’t agree with that. I just want to take care of that and have that dialogue immediately. Not harbor it. I think that’s the best way to get along with anyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>#7a-b 4</td>
<td>Well, not everybody is going to be transparent. You can always see into somebody’s head. If something is going on, if they seem hesitant to answer a question or if they act differently than they usually do, obvious differences in character recognizing those things and having that conversation. Asking: Is everything okay? Knowing that not everyone’s going to come out and tell you things. If you have a problem, just come out and ask them. Otherwise you’re never going to know for sure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>#8a-b 4</td>
<td>When we have staff meetings, everybody has an opportunity to talk. When you are that person who has the opportunity, everyone is silent, attentive, and gives eye contact. Everybody is good about that. When I talk to other people, I try to be attentive and present with them. Because I know how much that means to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treating people with respect</strong></td>
<td><strong>Problem resolution</strong></td>
<td><strong>Productive learning and change</strong></td>
<td><strong>Peace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Listening when people are talking. Like those situations with (a colleague) yesterday being able to be aware of people's work space and what they have going on. Not to just walk in and demand other people's attention, that they stop everything (immediately).&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Listening when people are talking. Like those situations with (a colleague) yesterday being able to be aware of people's work space and what they have going on. Not to just walk in and demand other people's attention, that they stop everything (immediately).&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;When you interact, no one putting each other down. There's a lot of building each other up around here. Respect is evident. It's something that happens all the time here.&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Treating people with respect - #9a&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Listening when people are talking. Like those situations with (a colleague) yesterday being able to be aware of people's work space and what they have going on. Not to just walk in and demand other people's attention, that they stop everything (immediately).&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Listening when people are talking. Like those situations with (a colleague) yesterday being able to be aware of people's work space and what they have going on. Not to just walk in and demand other people's attention, that they stop everything (immediately).&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can't think of one thing that hasn't been resolved. That means that every problem has been resolved. You're going to have those moments of conflict every once in a while, but having that open dialogue and noticing when another person is having an issue and talking about it in a productive manner is an important way to resolve it.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I can't think of one thing that hasn't been resolved. That means that every problem has been resolved. You're going to have those moments of conflict every once in a while, but having that open dialogue and noticing when another person is having an issue and talking about it in a productive manner is an important way to resolve it.&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Listening like the last question. It's how to resolve those issues and learn from that experience. Learning to notice when another person is having an issue and (to talk) about it in a productive manner to resolve it.&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Personally, I strive for it in every relationship I have. I'm not a fan of having discord with people I care about or people I interact with day to day. I'm always looking to have peace amongst everyone I'm around. It means having open dialogue when there are moments of disagreements and just coming to work and not feeling like, oh, no. That person is coming to talk to me. I never want to have that feeling. I make that effort to maintain peace. I try not to be a confrontational person. Not every person is going to have a good day every day. Negativity might feel like it aimed at you, but it could be coming from another place. Just knowing that I didn't do anything to make that person upset and that it might just be directed at me (though not caused by me).&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Personally, I strive for it in every relationship I have. I'm not a fan of having discord with people I care about or people I interact with day to day. I'm always looking to have peace amongst everyone I'm around. It means having open dialogue when there are moments of disagreements and just coming to work and not feeling like, oh, no. That person is coming to talk to me. I never want to have that feeling. I make that effort to maintain peace. I try not to be a confrontational person. Not every person is going to have a good day every day. Negativity might feel like it aimed at you, but it could be coming from another place. Just knowing that I didn't do anything to make that person upset and that it might just be directed at me (though not caused by me).&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Just be calm… neutral in response to negative energy.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Just be calm… neutral in response to negative energy.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Just be calm… neutral in response to negative energy.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Just be calm… neutral in response to negative energy.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13a-b</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Not being paranoid that they have ulterior motives. Like they're treating you one way when really they feel another way about you. I never assume the worst of anyone. If someone doesn't seem quite right one day, don't jump to conclusions about them.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Not being paranoid that they have ulterior motives. Like they're treating you one way when really they feel another way about you. I never assume the worst of anyone. If someone doesn't seem quite right one day, don't jump to conclusions about them.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Not being paranoid that they have ulterior motives. Like they're treating you one way when really they feel another way about you. I never assume the worst of anyone. If someone doesn't seem quite right one day, don't jump to conclusions about them.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Not being paranoid that they have ulterior motives. Like they're treating you one way when really they feel another way about you. I never assume the worst of anyone. If someone doesn't seem quite right one day, don't jump to conclusions about them.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Freedom to Disagree

Rather than test freedom to disagree through a Likert interview question, the researcher tested this construct using the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire. While the Likert interview responses are self-reports, the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire produced both other-reports and a self-report. Also differing from the Likert interview responses, which asked questions about individuals’ overall interactions with colleagues, the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire itemized the data by colleague (see Table 15).

The survey question was: “If you disagreed with this NSC colleague, how comfortable would you be: (a) to tell him/her that you disagreed and (b) to openly discuss your thoughts and ideas with him/her?” Respondents rated each of their colleagues. Each was instructed to rate oneself: “When you get to your name, please answer how comfortable you think your NSC colleagues are: (a) to tell you that they disagree with you and (b) to openly discuss their thoughts and ideas with you.” Participants were asked to provide one of the following responses for each name listed on the questionnaire, in order to rate their comfort level to disagree with that person: 1 (i.e., very uncomfortable), 2 (i.e., somewhat uncomfortable), 3 (i.e., neither comfortable nor uncomfortable), 4 (i.e., somewhat comfortable), 5 (i.e., very comfortable), or N/A (i.e., I have not had the opportunity to work with him/her.) Theory support was demonstrated by a Likert response of 4 (i.e., somewhat comfortable) or 5 (i.e., very comfortable).

Example. For example, for Team Member A, all nine participants in this case study rated this individual anonymously. The nine ratings included eight ratings from Team Member A’s colleagues, who rated the individual on how comfortable they were to disagree with Team Member A. Among the nine ratings was also a self-report from Team Member A, with this individual rating how comfortable she thought that NSC colleagues were to disagree with her.
and to openly discuss their thoughts and ideas with her. Because the questionnaire was anonymous, the self-report was not distinguished from the other reports.

Table 15

Team Member Data Analysis: Freedom to Disagree and Discuss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team member ID*</th>
<th>Total response minus N/A</th>
<th>“1” Likert response</th>
<th>“2” Likert response</th>
<th>“3” Likert response</th>
<th>“4” Likert response</th>
<th>“5” Likert response</th>
<th>Total “4” &amp; “5” response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>25.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>66.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>55.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>66.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>55.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean***</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>6.33%</td>
<td>13.92%</td>
<td>8.86%</td>
<td>32.91%</td>
<td>37.97%</td>
<td>70.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Staff members were randomly ordered. The identity of each is anonymous.

** When calculating percentages, each response of “N/A” reduced the denominator by one.

*** Mean figures were calculated by dividing the “4” and “5” responses by the difference of total responses minus the N/A responses.

Of those nine ratings, no NSC team members rated Team Member A with a “1” Likert response, indicating that they felt very uncomfortable to disagree with her. However, 11.11-percent of the NSC team members rated Team Member A with a “2” Likert response, indicating
that they felt somewhat uncomfortable to disagree with her. Similarly, 11.11-percent indicated a Likert response of 3, indicating that they were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable to disagree with her. In contrast, 44.44-percent and 33.33-percent indicated Likert responses of 4 and 5, respectively, indicating that 44.44-percent were somewhat comfortable to disagree with her, and 33.33-percent were very comfortable to disagree with her.

Per the research design, the theory support was demonstrated by a minimum of 75-percent of responses with a 4 or 5 rating. For Team Member A, a total of 77.77-percent of team members indicated that they were either somewhat comfortable or very comfortable to disagree with Team Member A.

**Case Data Analysis: Aggregate Data and Analysis by Empirical Indicator**

The quantitative team member data were analyzed in aggregate for each empirical indicator (see Table 16). These data included self-reported Likert interview responses, as well as self- and other-reported ratings from the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire. The analysis of the aggregate team member data provided insight into the case as a whole. Theory support was demonstrated by a minimum of 75-percent Likert responses of 4 (agree) or 5 (strongly agree).

Triangulating with the aggregate quantitative data, the qualitative data included interview narratives, direct observation of a staff meeting and individual interviews, and document review of the organization’s web site. The qualitative data were categorized by empirical indicator, in order to triangulate the quantitative data for construct validity. The interview narratives comprised the majority of the qualitative data. These narratives were derived from two overarching interview questions: (a) What is it like to work here? and (b) What happens when people disagree? The narrative data were augmented by direct observation and document review.
### Table 16

*Aggregate Data Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Empirical indicator</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
<th>Theory support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“4” Likert response</td>
<td>“5” Likert response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II values</strong></td>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inviting people to share their ideas and talents</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing freedom to disagree</td>
<td>32.91%</td>
<td>37.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II learned social behaviors</strong></td>
<td>Engaging in open dialogue</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions to seek understanding</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model II outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Productive learning and change</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In addition to the interview questions listed as qualitative data sources, the following data sources produced qualitative data for any empirical indicator: direct observation and document review.

**Model II Values**

**Espoused values.** Commitment to testing assumptions is a hallmark of the Model II socio-cognitive process. This hallmark is tested by comparing espoused values and real values to determine if they are congruent.
Mission. The values most espoused in the interviews and the staff meeting were those centered on the NSC mission, as reflected in the document review of the NSC web site. The mission describes a commitment to provide specific types of service to a specific population. In the interest of confidentiality for this study, the mission statement was withheld.

Real values. Document review provided the espoused values related to the organization's mission and purpose. NSC's espoused values, as evidenced through the document review, were focused on the organization's values as they relate to the clients and family members they serve. The qualitative data gleaned from interviews and direct observation supported the espoused values about clients and family members. With regard to NSC's values related to clients and family members, the espoused values and lived values were consistent. This consistency demonstrated that team members tend to test their assumptions to understand the clients and the clients' family members they serve.

However, team members were less likely to test their assumptions about their NSC colleagues. The findings indicated that 66.67-percent of team members either agreed or strongly agreed that "people here tend to test their assumptions by talking to each other, rather than jumping to conclusions." This finding is further discussed following the presentation of data.

Fulfillment from service. One team member spoke about the fulfillment that stems from using one's talents to serve clients and family members:

When you help somebody, and you change their life, there is nothing more fulfilling that that. One case (was a) gentleman who everyone had given up on, including his family. I sat across the table from him. I said, "If we're going to help you, you have to be accountable." You look them in the eye and lay it on the line. We're not judging them, but to move forward, they have to learn to be accountable. Now this gentleman has made
great strides and has a great relationship with his Case Advocate. Next time he comes in, I want to schedule time with him to tell him how proud [I am] of him that I am. Not condescending, just genuine. That’s one part of why we’re here, why we do what we do every day.

The espoused values related to the commitment to clients and their families were supported by the verbal and nonverbal behaviors across staff members. These behaviors were triangulated among team members and were supported as authentic. The verbal and nonverbal behavior of all the staff members interviewed indicated that the espoused values of commitment to clients and their families matched the real values, demonstrated through methods triangulation of the quantitative, Likert measures with the qualitative measures. Triangulation of data sources also lent validity to the match between espoused and real values concerning clients and their family members. A match was evident between the verbal behavior spoken during the interviews, the nonverbal behavior recorded through direct observation, and the mission, purpose, and other statements listed on NSC’s web site.

**Personal connection to the client experience.** Team members talked a lot about the purpose of their work. One team member said, “We know the differences we’re making in people’s lives, even the lives of staff.”

Each team member has a personal connection to the population of people that the National Service Coalition serves, either fitting that demographic themselves or being family members of people who fit the demographic. Having this personal connection to the population served is a prerequisite for being hired by NSC (NSC Director, personal communication, February 7, 2013). The rationale for that requirement was summed up by one team member, who
said that she shared the lived experience of the population that NSC serves, so the work of NSC is important to me.

Another team member described a personal experience that defined her passion for serving clients and their family members. Applying that personal experience to her commitment to NSC, she said:

Am I grateful every single day that I walk through these doors? You better believe it. The mission is important. You have a Director who is sincere. You have a Director who is not spoiled—she's lived through hell and back again (with her sons' personal experiences).

Another colleague described her deep, personal experience as well:

(My husband) has (a) severe (disorder) has (had it) for 45 years. I can share (my experience). I'd like to see a group for wives or kids. I'm sure there's lots of people like me. Been through lots of stuff. I know that there's a greener pasture on the other side. I want them to know they're not alone.

**Deep sense of purpose.** The work at NSC provides team members with a deep sense of purpose as they live the organization mission. Each has a passion and finds purpose in serving the population at the heart of NSC’s mission. One team member, Kelly, commented on the variety of each day’s work and the people that the team serves, the clients and family members from differing backgrounds, each with a story to tell. Kelly said, “We're all involved with people coming in, and you never know who you're going to talk to or interact with.”

Helping clients and their family members is the priority for team members. Teri said, “The clients that do come in here, we all love them and take the time to visit with (them).”
Kelly said:

(I enjoy) socializing with the people (i.e., clients and families) who come in. One of our regular clients who comes in (is a colleague’s) husband, David. He started coming in long before (my colleague) started working here. Those interruptions in the day are really nice.

One day, an elderly man who fit the client demographic came in to the NSC headquarters and remarked, “I can’t believe you have this place for us.” The team member giving the tour said, “This place is for you. It’s your home away from home.” She said that exchange brought tears to her eyes, as well as to the eyes of the client. To lighten the mood, she added, “We even have cable TV for you.”

*The facility: An extension of service.* NSC’s national headquarters is an exquisite facility, with luxurious amenities and spaces for clients and family members to enjoy. The luxurious amenities are comparable to the common spaces of a five-star hotel. For several decades, the building had been a bank and more recently had been a swank night club. The richness of the space and its décor created the ideal location for this new organization. One team member commented, “I love when the public comes in, and I love watching people’s faces. (We get) feedback that it’s so warm and welcoming.”

In addition to offering information, support, and case advocacy, NSC offers clients and their family members a rich facility to relax, to receive help and support, and to learn. In addition to the office and desk areas used by the staff, multiple spaces found throughout the facility are designed for use by clients and their families. Greeting visitors when they enter NSC is a space with leather sofas and a large flat screen TV, an idea space for clients and family members to relax or to watch a game. Another space includes multiple computer stations for clients and
family members to participate in job training webinars or to locate information on numerous
topics, including client disorders and benefit programs. NSC’s headquarters includes a library
of materials that is housed within one of the building’s two vaults, a reminder of the building’s
history as a bank. The facility also includes a beautiful Education Center, with tables, chairs, a
large flat screen for presentations, and a refreshment area; the Education Center is utilized for
team member training and events and is also available for community organizations to rent.
Centered within the facility is a reception area with several tables, each surrounded by four lush,
tapestry chairs. Located in the back of the building is a full kitchen, used not only by staff for
lunch and breaks but also for staff to bake goodies to provide to clients and their family members
who visit NSC.

The NSC facility plays an important role as the location where team members seek to live
the NSC mission and purpose through service to clients and family members. As such, the
facility is the primary location where learned social behaviors are carried out among the team.

**Unwritten rules.** As part of the interviews, team members were asked to give examples
of the unwritten rules at NSC. This question drew a different reaction than the other interview
questions did. All the participants paused in response to this question, with several tilting their
heads in thought or saying, *Hmmm.*

Demonstrating how people can become blind to unwritten rules and other elements of
culture, Kelly paused, trying to think of examples. She said, *On trying to think* But they
become so ingrained.

Kim said one unwritten rule is *that we should interact. Sometimes that’s tough when
you get those days (that you don’t feel like it).*
Similarly, another team member said:

I think it’s an unwritten rule that everyone should have a smile on their face whenever the public may encounter them. Since you don’t know when public will come in, have a smile on your face at all times. (Second), give the impression of unity, even if there’s division going on behind the scenes. (Third), not having anything negative to say ever. (Fourth), you should have a solution-focused attitude. If you raise the issue, you should have already thought about how you would solve it. Complaining for complaining sake is not appropriate in the work place.

Teri said that one unwritten rule is to put your differences aside and know that everybody has different obstacles. We are just supposed to get along with one another. Listen to everybody’s point of view, not just your own.

The Director said:

There’s probably a number of (unwritten rules). Especially respect. We’ve talked about that in staff meetings. Because respect is so important (and because the culture was somewhat shaken by the recent turnover of two staff members), (the Internal Consultant) is going to teach a two-hour class on emotional intelligence.

Respect was a common theme among the staff’s responses regarding the unwritten rules at NSC. One employee said:

In any situation, there are those unwritten rules that society puts on you. You just understand when things are appropriate and when some things are not appropriate. Like you (culturally) learn that having a cell phone out and texting all the time is distracting to other people. We’ve never been told, ‘No cell phones,’ but it’s an unwritten rule. It’s good etiquette. It’s being respectful of other people.
Similarly, Kelly gave the example of showing respect when approaching colleagues while they are busy with work. Kelly talked about the use of nonverbal cues to learn and adapt to organization culture:

(A colleague) was talking to a client in-person, and (I approached the colleague because there was) a phone call. I went to talk but (the team member) didn’t make eye contact, so I knew that this wasn’t a good time (because my colleague was busy). You just learn those things as you go.

In addition to this example of the culture’s unwritten rule of respect being evident in interpersonal exchanges between staff members, Kelly mentioned the unwritten rule of respect in exchanges with clients and their family members. She said:

When you have sensitive information from a (client) The things they share are not always comfortable to hear. You learn to show that you’re not affected by the things they say. You don’t want to give the impression that something they’ve said has bothered or surprised you (or they might put a wall up or become offended and decide not to seek help from NSC).

In terms of communicating the challenges that statistics indicate that clients encounter: (The Director’s) perspective is that they be addressed openly and professionally and that all perspectives are valid on the subject. (The Director) as the leader has real sensitivity. She is hard core on confidentiality, as she should be. (She is) passionate about being non-judgmental, particularly if (there is an issue that is) characteristic of (clients) We talk about (it by framing) its relevance to assisting them. But we keep our own bias to those conditions private. You don’t go to back office to talk about it. You can journal later, if you want to.
When asked about the unwritten rules at NSC about the way people should interact, the Director smiled and said, “Unwritten rules... soon to be written rules. Today I was working on writing the team member handbook.”

**Testing assumptions.** Some data supported the testing of assumptions, which led to learning. As one example, Chris said, “I think you always have to check-in with people to make sure you’re not being intrusive... disrespectful. And expect an honest answer.”

As another example of analyzing one’s assumptions, a team member said:

I try not to be judgmental or take (disagreements) personally, but I know at the same time, I’m human, and in my mind’s eye, I might put (my colleagues involved in the disagreement) in the corner for a little while until I can process it. And they probably do it too. And I might say, “I didn’t think about it that way. I know if I don’t want to be judged, I have to be accepting too.

As yet another example of testing assumptions, Kim talked about the change that resulted from analyzing her own assumptions as she learned to understand and appreciate a particular individual. Kim said:

Dave, a (client) We cut our teeth on Dave. On Valentine’s, he bought each of us a box of chocolates. And at Easter, he brought us each a chocolate bunny. Meant a lot. He doesn’t have a lot (of money). I learned a lot from Dave. I used to be a little impatient.

**Neglecting to test assumptions.** A large portion of the data revealed instances of neglecting to test assumptions. The National Service Coalition was founded in mid-2012. From the time it was established through the end of 2012, the organization was described by team members as demonstrating many Model II behaviors. The team members described the work atmosphere at that time as unified, with the entire team working together to build the
organization from scratch and to advance NSC's mission. Since then, however, the team's unity has been tested, and the focus on advancing NSC's mission has been somewhat distracted by the departure of two staff members.

The two staff members left NSC within the couple months prior to this study. The circumstances surrounding their departure were unknown, but the organization culture was impacted by both their departure and by the tension that mounted prior to their departure. The remaining team members' perspectives about the situation were mixed. Through direct observation and interview data, the researcher noted that some team members had developed friendships with the colleagues who had left and were disappointed by their departure. In contrast, others were relieved that the tension had subsided.

During the months prior, two silos had been building amongst the staff. The first silo was created by team members who did not support the Director and who used Model I behaviors to build alliances. The other silo represented those who supported the Director and who were either not invited or not willing to join the alliance of those who did not support the Director. Tension had grown between the two silos, causing a divide among the team. One staff member described the dysfunction caused by the divisiveness and tension. “When there was a lot going on before some people left (the organization), there were actual physical symptoms. Knots in stomach... People had that. Headaches. More missed time (off of work). Just didn’t want to deal with it. Needed some down-time. I got very guarded.”

The researcher then asked if the team member thought the guardedness, as a defense mechanism, was starting to heal too. The team member responded, “It (is) When you mix so many people together, you just come together. I might not ever be as open (here) as I once was,
but I probably won’t be as guarded as I was (during the period when there was angst among staff) either.

When asked how others’ disagreements affected the work atmosphere, Kelly said:

There (was) definitely a more negative, tense vibe, so (it was) harder to concentrate on your work. It consumed the office, so (it was) hard to concentrate on much else. You (had) to put it aside. Everything will get better. It can be a distraction. We need to work around it.

When the Director was asked how people’s disagreements affect her work experience, she described it as “hard. It’s really hard. I’m not going to take sides. But, if it’s clear-cut right or (morally or ethically) wrong, I’m going to stand for right.”

Another team member said, “There have been problems, and it has been unfortunate. And it makes me angry and sad that (the Director has) had to deal with some of this pettiness because it has distracted her from the mission.”

The silos hampered open discussion, and assumptions grew to explain the divide. One assumption among one of the silos was that the Director played favorites. Another assumption this one among the other silo was that the staff members who later departed were not a good fit for the organization, that they were focused more on self-promotion than on advancing NSC’s mission.

The team members who were relieved by the departure cited a break from the tension. For confidentiality purposes, the Director did not discuss the circumstances related to the departure of the two staff members. The uncompromising need for confidentiality prevented open and honest communication between the Director and staff on this issue. Because team members did not have the opportunity to openly discuss the issue with the Director, assumptions
have been presumed and have gone untested. When asked how people disagree at NSC, several team members commented on the departure of the two staff members, the work atmosphere leading to their departure, and the work atmosphere since the departure.

*Untested assumptions: Speculation for the staff members’ departure.* Jan said, “The only time I noticed (the work atmosphere changing was) when the two people left. The only thing that affected the atmosphere was that I didn’t know why they left. Not sure why. So there was a temporary discomfort. Curiosity. The Director was good about keeping confidentiality.”

One team member said, “A couple team members left, and none of us were real happy about that, but we all agreed that (the Director is) the boss, and what she says goes, and there has to be rules.”

Kim commented, “There are a couple people that have (left). That’s between (the Director and the two former staff members). I got along with everyone.”

Kim added, “There is) some touchiness (about the situation surrounding) the two staff who left. It’s hard to let the white elephant sit there. It was like walking on pins and needles after they left, but then you decide how you’re going to feel about it, and then you move on.”

When asked how people communicate when they disagree at NSC, Jan said, “I don’t think we’ve had any disagreements.” She then added, “We’ve had two people leave, but I’m not privy to the information about why. As far as I know, I haven’t had any disagreements.”

One team member said, “The change in staffing might be a touchy subject. It might be touchy because (we) aren’t communicating about it. (There’s some) negativity around the office. We don’t talk about it with each other. But I feel like other people are talking about it under the table. I want to talk about it freely, but I don’t because it might make other people uncomfortable. (Sometimes) I’ve gone out into the open office space, and people stop talking. I
know that they’re not talking about me. (They’re speculating about the staffing transition.) I so badly want to have all the cards out on the table.

When asked how people get along at NSC, one staff member said, “I think it’s better now than what it was. I really felt a divide before. I feel that the toxic part we’ve at least corralled. For the most part, the others get along good. Some more than others. You still get a little cliqueness, but you get that anywhere.”

**Untested assumption: Playing favorites.** The interview data revealed a pocket of individuals who said that others have labeled them as the Director’s favorites. Only those individuals considered as favorites volunteered this information to the researcher. The individuals who had labeled others as favorites did not mention the issue of favoritism to the researcher.

One team member, who said she was labeled as a favorite, said, “(The Director) sometimes gets criticized, (but how can you criticize when) you have a boss who is so understanding? I have seen (the Director) bending over backwards (for people here).” Through direct observation during the interview, the researcher observed admiration in the team member’s tone as she described the Director. The team member added:

I have a loyalty to (the Director) because of our history and also because I feel her pain. If anyone doesn’t respect (the Director), it’s because they don’t know her, or they aren’t empathetic to put themselves in her shoes.

(Two colleagues) have told me I’m one of (the Director’s) favorites (to explain) why I’m so loyal. I’m loyal because I know (the Director). I have faith in (the Director). She may take on more than she can chew, but she will get there. I have faith in her. I do get accused of being a favorite because of my history with (her).
During an interview, the Director also said that a staff member had accused her of playing favorites. The Director said she responded to that comment by telling the staff member, "No, I have people here who work, and (a couple) people who (need more supervision to stay focused on the work, on the common mission)." The researcher observed a tone of tiredness, a tone of disappointment as the Director talked about the tension among staff during that period.

During an interview with another team member, the researcher asked a follow-up question to probe this issue. When asked if the Director plays favorites, that team member said:

No. But I think there’s a perception that she does when (the Director) and another person speak the same language. (The Director and a certain colleague have) a special (working) relationship. (I attribute their close relationship to the collegiality in the way they work together, as well as to their history as family friends.)

Beyond that, I think that people who have demonstrated they are competent and that they are self-directed and (that they) get the vision. They are (afforded the opportunity to be self-directed with their work). People who have not demonstrated that get supervision. It’s hard. These people had status and credibility in their former career, but now they’re on the bottom of the totem pole, which could be disconcerting. If there was a bit more empathy, a bit more put yourself in (the Director’s) shoes. (The Director) has been much softer than she is comfortable being because she is so sensitive to people and their backgrounds. It’s not that she’s been less of a leader and I shared this with her. (Because she is working with a team of people who have a personal connection to the lived experience of the people that NSC serves), I think she’s been less discerning that she would have been otherwise.
Untested assumption: Organization fit. One team member said:

My perception is that not everybody is happy here or they are hyper-critical. It is because they want to do a narrow, focused job. But we need people who stay focused but can stay flexible and not just say, “It’s my way or the highway.” We lost one staff (member) who had that attitude. On the other hand, this person wasn’t very accountable with their time and spent a lot of time complaining. Other staff (members) liked her and supported her to the point that I felt that she wanted to be complaining for the sake of complaining. If she was expected to consider a different view-point, she didn’t like it. That’s my opinion.

She purported to be excited about the vision and (helping the populations that NSC serves) but it was hard for her to get access to the Director to work on her deadlines. But you have to be flexible. Be considerate of (the Director’s) time, and she will make time for you unequivocally. This person didn’t stay here. There were a couple people who have gone. I don’t think this was the right place for them. Sometimes we have to do things outside our job descriptions. This doesn’t bother me. This bothers some people a lot.

Another team member said, “I admit I’m quick to form impressions. (When I began at NSC), I summed people up pretty quickly, as far as who shared common philosophy with me and who didn’t. The incidents that have involved (problems) involved the people I suspected early on (who) may not have shared the same philosophies as NSC.”

One team member likened these problems to:

Growing pains, the psychological groans and moans of moving forward. Because of (the) speed (at which NSC grew), (the problems are) highlighting the limitations of the interview process. There’s only so much you can glean from a short period, when you
haven’t already established what your organization is going to be like. Leadership through (the Director) would have (NSC) be a very safe place. We’re still (experiencing) growing pains. I think everyone’s heart is to get to that place together. It’s just going to take some time.

**Data analysis: Model II values.** Testing of assumptions was the single empirical indicator used to test the Model II value of understanding one’s true self and other people. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree that people at NSC tend to test their assumptions by talking to each other rather than jumping to conclusions. The responses revealed that two-thirds of the team agreed (i.e., a rating of four on a five-point Likert scale). None strongly agreed with that statement (i.e., a Likert response of five). One-third of the team did not agree, providing a response of one (i.e., strongly disagree), two (i.e., disagree), or three (neither agree nor disagree). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to the testing of assumptions, lending construct validity and confidence in the findings through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. The qualitative data was consistent overall with the Likert responses, but only 66.67-percent of the team indicated a four or five Likert response. While the testing of assumptions was evident at NSC, it was not prevalent enough to reach the 75-percent threshold. Therefore, this study’s findings did not support the theory that NSC, as a learning organization, would demonstrate wholeness-oriented Model II values, as evidenced by the testing of assumptions.
Model II Learned Social Behaviors

Model II learned social behaviors is a unit of analysis that includes seven empirical indicators: (a) including people to develop belongingness, (b) inviting people to share their ideas and talents, (c) providing freedom to disagree, (d) engaging in open dialogue, (e) asking questions to seek understanding, (f) listening or observing to seek understanding, and (g) treating people with respect.

Including people to develop belongingness. Marcia said, “I look forward to coming to work. I feel that when I walk through that door, even though there (are) some stressors with working with people outside of NSC (i.e., clients and family members with serious issues), I look forward to it. I never know what the day is going to bring. I like that. It is (flexible), but there is structure and guidelines. (You are) allowed to be yourself and find your way. We nurture each other. Not mother each other, but support each other. I love that.”

When asked how people work together, Pat said, “Very well. Everybody plays well with everyone else.”

Family environment. Pat described NSC as having “a culture of family.” When the researcher asked what has created that culture, Pat responded, “We are driven by a common purpose. We have a true passion for what we do and how we do business. I don’t think anyone has lost sight of that focus yet, and I hope they don’t.”

One colleague, Kelly, described the atmosphere as “professional, but (we) laugh and share jokes.” We all get along well with each other. We all have chemistry with each other, as a work family.” We play off each other as human beings.”
Jan said, "When we get groups together, we seem to click okay and have fun and get along very well. The people here are great. (I) couldn't ask for any better people. They want to help. I like working here."

Marcia added, "Also, it may be just one of those really rough days. And (one of us) may just need someone to connect. May just need to talk with someone about a crappy day. I think we work well that way too."

Lee described the social atmosphere as "sometimes really, really serious, but sometimes really light. I think we need that lightness because of all we're dealing with. You need to stay positive and upbeat. I don't know how to explain it. You are so all in. You are so committed to each other. There is a bond. You really are another family. When something happens, it does affect us all. Like a death or (staff turnover). It changes the dynamics of what was there before. And change isn't always easy. The loss of life (among the clients we serve) is really difficult."

Kelly said, "Those moments and when we have our Thursday staff meetings, we feel like a really weird family. Even when we add people, it still feels like a family element is maintained."

"At NSC, Sara said, "the atmosphere is warm, collegial, familial, describing NSC as very relationship-oriented. She added:

"There's a real sense that everyone is part of a family. We have obligations to one another. The organization is very collaborative, particularly in the beginning, when we were getting NSC off the ground. (At NSC), people make sure that all parties that need to be involved are part of the conversation."
When asked how people get along at NSC, Pat said:

Very well. It's a culture of family. It's a small organization. The building looks very large but on the inside, it's not so big. People work closely. Real bonds of friendship have been made. (The social atmosphere is) light-hearted. The sociology of the group is real diverse, diverse background of people… Ages, skill sets, personalities. Somehow magically, the mood and atmosphere is light-hearted. I have yet to see anyone get real angry with a coworker. My personal philosophy is that when it's no longer fun to work here, I don't want to work here. If I can't have fun with what I'm doing...(I will leave and do something else).

Fun atmosphere. Teri described NSC as a fun place.

Lee echoed, really like it. I love the atmosphere.

Kelly said:

I feel like we get along really well. We all have good chemistry. Everyone is professional, and we have fun. When one person needs something, there's always someone who can help them. You can ask (for help). I don't think anyone's too intimidating. Everybody understands their place and the barriers that might come into play. As long as everyone is very aware of what other people are doing if they are in the middle of something (during the work day and conscientious not to interrupt them) there's a lot of respect for people in those situations.

Bonding over food. The Director said that baking has provided a neutral environment for staff members to work together one-on-one and build strong working relationships. She said:

I've started putting people together in teams. I asked for volunteers for people to put things together for staff birthdays, and (two staff members) volunteered... (Another pair
of staff members) are partners (in managing) the inventory of the kitchen items and Education Center items. (We have a) monthly potluck with themes. (This month), we will have a Mexican themed potluck.

Another staff member also talked about the staff potlucks:

Once a month we’ve started implementing themed potlucks. The next one is Mexican theme. Those are all really fun. We kick back and get to know each other better. When we’re working, there’s minimal opportunity to get to know other people’s personalities. I personally look forward to taking off the professional hat and getting to know each other.

At potlucks and events, we’re at work but we’re not working like we usually do. Those are the times when we can really get to know each other. That break from the usual routine from what people get used to what they do when they come to work. The walls come down, and people feel free to be themselves. When we are working, there are still opportunities to socialize now and then, in the middle of when we’re trying to get work done. If somebody comes over with a question, that will lead to a little discussion about that question. May lead to a little socializing. Even professionally, I get to know them, understand who they are. The way someone answers your questions, you learn something about them and their personality.

Bonding over food was evident not only between staff members but also as a gesture to clients and their family members. The Director described these small gestures of kindness as important to the clients. That cup of coffee (for clients). Baking homemade cookies. That cookie that was made was an experience for staff. (A staff member) bakes every Monday, and others rotate with her. Then you have goodies throughout the week. Everybody is included.
**Drawbacks.** Despite the overall consensus among team members that everyone is included, one team member did say that the nature of the person's job does result in some isolation and feeling left out. When the researcher asked if the team member wished that she had a different work role, the team member responded, "Yes, there's lots of times when I feel that way."

Another team member talked about the collaboration at work but said she missed the opportunity to build friendships that led to socialization outside of work. She said, "People are very comfortable sharing the details of their lives, in a professional way of course. I would say that people manage the social events that NSC puts on very well. They are collaborative with the events. There's not much socialization outside of work with one another. I'm not sure what accounts for that. In past experiences, that's been different for me. I usually develop (strong) friendships. Maybe they're more comfortable keeping a stronger line between their work and home life."

**Data analysis: Including people to develop belongingness.** One of the seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors is including people to develop belongingness. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: "I feel like I fit in at NSC." The responses revealed that 33.33-percent agreed (i.e., a rating of four on a five-point Likert scale), and 55.56-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-
scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 88.89-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses. Therefore, this study’s findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, includes people to develop belongingness, one empirical indicator of Model II learned social behaviors.

**Inviting people to share their ideas and talents.** Pat said:

We pick each other’s brains a lot. More than we realize. Staff meetings are a little indicative of that. Times when we seek each other’s expertise, ideas, suggestions. Even (having) a lot of life experience, I still don’t have all the answers. I don’t even know all the questions. (We complement each other) to provide the best service to clients, to bring our best skills to the table.

Teri echoed, “We all have something to offer.”

Marcia said:

We try to use each other as a sounding board... We get (each other’s) perceptions. Everyone’s input is valuable. They may see things in a different way, which is valuable. We are a team. I will seek out individuals who have more experience in a particular area to benefit our clients and family members.

Jan also described how people help each other. For example, in troubleshooting a computer problem, “we all give our advice and walk each other through it.”

When asked how people work together, Kim commented on the process that the team uses to help clients and family members who seek NSC’s services. Kim explained:

One of the biggest things I can think of is if a case comes in, case advocacy gets it first. Another person then is drawn in to help them talk about money. Help get them food. In
the long run, they need a job, so (one colleague) would help. It’s been a collaborative
effort on a lot of cases. We’ve kind of learned now what doesn’t work. Now we’re
establishing what does work.

Another team member said:

We work together really well, as far as everyday work stuff. If you need help or have a
question, everybody understands who the appropriate person to ask that question would
be. They know who the appropriate person would be to get help. For tech-y stuff, I get a
lot of questions. People learn, Oh, she helped before, I can go to her again. I (also) go
to Pat for (help when I need Pat’s particular area of expertise).

Inviting people to share in the decision-making process is representative of an
organization that invites people to share their ideas and talents. Sara described NSC this way,
saying, there are always three people involved in any kind of discussion involving a decision or
program.

One team member’s perspective is that the Director has the final word on all decisions.
The team member did not describe this negatively. In describing her previous work experiences,
she described the boss having the final word as a typical work environment, perhaps her
expectation of a work environment. She said:

In meetings, we all kick (our ideas) out there. (The Director) is the boss, so she makes the
decisions. We all share our own points-of-view (based on our different life experiences).

It comes down to (The Director is) the boss and she decides.

Teri talked about people sharing their ideas and talents at staff meetings. She said, We
go into the meeting and discuss the agenda. Advocates tell about what they’re dealing with, and
we can interject the feedback.
Data analysis: Inviting people to share their ideas and talents. One of the seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors is inviting people to share their ideas and talents. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: "At NSC, I am encouraged to share my ideas and talents." The responses revealed that 77.78-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five on a five-point scale), and no team members indicated agreement with a rating of four. Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 77.78-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses. Therefore, this study's findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, invites people to share their ideas and talents, one empirical indicator of Model II learned social behaviors.

Providing freedom to disagree. Sara talked about the freedom to disagree, explaining:

I certainly think there is room for disagreement. There is a general expectation of humility, another unwritten rule. The expectation is that you don’t think your idea is the best, without modification. (The Director) is willing to entertain disagreements if it’s done professionally. (You should be) solution-focused. You shouldn’t disagree in a public setting. Take it in private. Staff meetings might not be the best place to say you have a problem with something. As long as those things are taken into consideration, (the
Director) is open to hearing disagreement. (The Director) is very perceptive and aware of those things before they're brought to her in an official sense. If people aren't willing to go to (her), it says more about the person rather than (the Director) and the culture that's being created.

Kim said, "We can have disagreements in terms of a simple difference of opinion. Kim provided the following example:

Early on My job description wasn't turning out like I thought it should. So I went and talked to (the Director) about it. Working closely with a small crew is not always easy because your ideas don't always mesh. Then (the Director) and I brought in a third person to talk it through. We approached it like: "Hey, we need to work this out." I think we try. That's why I like this place because we try.

Pat said, "I think we have agreed to disagree sometimes. We're all big people here. It's not that everyone knows the answer. Sometimes it creates some good discussion. At the end of the day, we can disagree and we're still friends." When asked how people communicate when they disagree, Pat said:

That's a tough one. I guess I haven't seen much disagreement with people. I would hope that they could sit down and talk it out. Everyone plays well together, so I just haven't seen it here. If there's a disagreement issue, it hasn't created a problem. I haven't seen argumentative interaction. People agree to disagree. Not everyone's right, not everyone's wrong. (They agree) in an adult manner. It turns out to be a positive rather than a negative.

When asked how people communicate when they disagree, Marcia said:
It might be as subtle as raising their voice. Not in a bad way. They're just so excited. They might make more eye contact. (They) might come to a person directly (one-on-one) after a meeting (if they wanted to discuss it privately, rather than to disagree during a meeting.) (They) just approach each other, (saying),  "Here's how I see it. (This is how they learn a) different perspective.

Jan, Pat, and Teri said they hadn't experienced or observed any significant disagreements at NSC that resulted in angry confrontation. Teri explained:

None of us have gotten real verbal. There may have been at times, we said, "We just don't agree," and it was just left at that. If you want to carry it any further, you and the other person could go into (the Director's) office and discuss it further, but I've never seen that happen. Just simple differences of opinion. Nothing that would start a yelling match. I guess we all realize that this is a learning process for all of us. We all have the same heart. We all have a heart for the clients. We're all here for the same reason.

When asked about disagreements at NSC, Kelly said:

I guess it depends on the person and how they're going to handle it. I can't really think of any major situations when somebody has disagreed so much that they got angry. I think overall, when somebody disagrees, they just bring it up: "Well actually I feel this way." We're all adults and we can reason. There have been a couple situations when people were more reactionary — more childish — couldn't reason.

One team member attributed the team's uneasiness to disagree to the team's former group dynamics. She described a colleague's behavior as "manipulative." She doesn't play well with others. She won't come to your face and tell you she's angry. She puts on the attitude of five-year-old when candy's been taken away."
Another team member said:
I’ve only confronted one person here. That person made judgment calls caused problems. (There was an issue with) something (that) should have been resolved with a client and had gone on far too long. (It) should have been turned over to case advocacy. The situation gave the client hope when there was no hope (for a particular resolution to occur). I did get upset and (confronted her). She shut me down. Wouldn’t make eye contact. She waived me off with her hand, and tried to talk over me.

Being free to disagree with the Director was described by one team member as "positive." The team member said:

For a particular program, (the Director) had one way of viewing it, and I had a very different way. I was comfortable in sharing my (perspective) with (the Director), and she was open. I thought about it very differently. (The Director) took my perspective into consideration. I don’t have corporate background so I know that (the Director) might have a different viewpoint. I asked another employee about my viewpoint, and the employee agreed (with my viewpoint). (Next), I communicated (my viewpoint) to (the Director). The other employee’s perception was that (the Director) was receptive because I (was the one who) brought (the idea).

Another staff member said, "I don’t worry about small, insignificant issues. Sometimes the pettiness of some issues gets out of proportion, in relationship to the overall operation of the organization. (I notice it), but petty issues don’t matter as much to me."

Kelly would disagree that an individual could remain unaffected as turmoil is observed among colleagues. Kelly said:
Heated disagreements are rare. Everyone talks to each other with respect, in a way that doesn’t get anyone too excited. If it is in those very rare situations when we’ve had somebody really hot—like if someone is put in a situation where they are being attacked or have some kind of big issue to resolve (blown-up)—(it is) more than just a conversation, and more of a heated conversation. And it never both parties. It is always one person calmly talking and one person more reactionary. We are a family. Like with family, when one person has an issue, we all feel it. It puts a tense vibe throughout the office. It hasn’t happened very often, but (when it does), it is tense. Like you are walking on pins and needles. (In those situations, it) not a comfortable time to work here. When (those situations are) resolved, you can feel it. The air clears again. Like in a family, you can feel (any tension between others), but if they can work through things, it always gets resolved.

**Data analysis: Providing freedom to disagree.** The third of seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors is providing freedom to disagree. Testing this empirical indicator was performed using a different method than the other empirical indicators. Team members completed the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire, an anonymous questionnaire. While the other empirical indicators were measured via self-reports, the freedom to disagree was measured by both self- and other-reports. The questionnaire asked team members to rate how comfortable they are to disagree with each individual colleague. When they came to their own names on the questionnaire, they were asked to rate how comfortable they think others are to disagree with them. The responses revealed that the organization feels somewhat comfortable to disagree with 32.91-percent of team members (i.e., a rating of four on a five-point Likert scale), and the organization feels very comfortable to disagree with 37.97-percent of team members.
members (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. While the qualitative data was consistent overall with the Likert responses, a four or five Likert response was indicated in rating only 70.89-percent of team members as either somewhat comfortable or very comfortable to disagree. Therefore, this study’s findings did not support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, provides freedom to disagree, one empirical indicator of Model II learned social behaviors.

**Engaging in open dialogue.** The team members provided mixed perspectives on the degree to which they engage in open dialogue. One team member said:

Most people are able to approach each other. In psychology, you don’t approach somebody with, *`You-you-you* [said while finger-pointing]. You approach each other with appropriate language that’s neutral, (giving the message that): *`We’re still on same playing field. There’s just something I want to talk through with you.* If I feel like there’s any conflict if anyone says something, and something inside of me says I just don’t agree with that I just want to take care of that and have that dialogue immediately. Not harbor it. I think that’s the best way to get along with anyone.

Kim also commented on being able to have open discussions:

For the most part, people get along with each other. There (are) conflicts like any place. We are such different people, in such a small team. I think that makes a difference,
maybe (it would be different if) there were 250 employees, but here we have just each other to deal with. But in many ways, that’s good. We all have good and bad days. I think there are a lot of us. We try to clear things up right away. We all compromise and agree to work as well as we can with each other. As long as everything is on the table, everything is good.

**Passive-aggressive behavior.** One team member commented on staff members’ interactions:

Sometimes it’s passive-aggressive, and there won’t be a direct (conversation). People try to smooth things over and realize the stressors they have when dealing with the clients. Some take it more personally. We’re trying to smooth that over. There is still a little of that passive-aggressive left over from a couple months ago. (But) we all try to be adults.

When asked about the work atmosphere, Teri said:

I’ve never seen a real difference in the tone. There might be a time when someone wouldn’t come by your office like they used to or smile like they used to, but in a couple days, it’s back to normal. Nothing drastic.

Being a peacemaker, Teri added, “I don’t like to see anybody mad. It does affect everybody when you know someone a little ticky. You notice that (if you) leave them alone, they’ll come out of it. It’s a lot more pleasurable when everyone’s happy.”

**Sidebar conversations.** One example of passive-aggressive behavior is the pattern of sidebar conversations (Argyris, 2010). These are conversations that spin-off from a previous discussion but deliberately exclude at least one individual who was involved in the initial conversation.
One team member pointed out the sidebars, saying:

Things happen discretely. It’s hard to capture the lack of professionalism. At some level, you make the choice not to address it directly. Part of it may be each of the employees’ the awesome, wonderful part is that they have (had) significant levels of influence in (their professional backgrounds), which is why they were offered a position at NSC. But then (NSC) brings people in all people of high status. There’s a disjoint between the way they are treated and the way they (are accustomed to being) treated. It’s hard that people (are) on same playing field, (particularly when they come from organizations with an established) hierarchy In (a hierarchical) culture, you don’t question If individuals coming from (this hierarchical) culture (join NSC with) lots of questions about their proposals or way they want to do something, they wouldn’t get very far (This is where) that communication workshop could do a lot of good.

The Director commented on the sidebar conversations, saying:

They usually come to me or I see them on the (security) cameras, in the corners, whispering. They look guilty and I walk by, and they quit talking. They talk to me (individually), or they spread it. We’ve worked hard to have them talk to me, not to spread it.

One team member said:

Unfortunately, I would say (neglecting to engage in open dialogue) is one of the weaker areas in the emergence in this organization. I’ve had several conversations with (the Director) in order to change that. Unfortunately, there are currently a lot of sidebars. On some level, there is some distrust. I’m not sure where that comes from. There’s not enough history to lead people to distrust. Sidebars have led to some factioning.
Unfortunately, people have not utilized professional behaviors when they have a disagreement or problem. Eventually it ends up with (the Director). She may contact individuals who she thinks has a lot of influence. What’s sad is that it’s very reactionary. (The Director) is working to change those expectations.

**Mediation by the Director.** Teri said:

(The Director) does want you to talk to her if you didn’t think something was fair. (The Director) always says, if you have any issues or anything to bring up, you can always talk with her. But basically, we just iron it out (ourselves). Nobody gets real concerned about a lot of things.

The Director had a different perspective. When asked how people communicate when they disagree, she said, “It’s more or not. They don’t communicate when they disagree. They have their disagreement and then I hear about it.”

When asked how touchy subjects are handled, one team member said, “(The Director) is the leader, the boss, and I respect that. We’ve had heated discussions sometimes, but it’s always been a mature discussion. Never been a disrespectful discussion.”

When asked how people communicate when they disagree, Kim said:

(The Director) always tries. Can’t always smooth things over, but she tries. Now that we’ve been here awhile, we try now to smooth things over with each other. Early on (there were) cat fights. Now you know the boundaries, where not to rough each other. We work together well. We know at this point what’s going to work out, and what’s not. You’ve got to work out a solution or drop it. Awareness is huge. We’re learning what to do, as much as we’re learning what not to do. I try to learn people’s strengths.
When asked about disagreements that have been observed, one team member said:

I sensed them on an intuitive level. I was brought in on a meeting. A situation had erupted. I think I was brought in as a witness and also for (the Director) to have someone to give her feedback. I acted as a mediator in the end. I appreciate having credibility but maybe some think, *Who do you think you are?* (In this particular situation that had erupted), the person was notified I would be there only five minutes ahead of time. (The person) was very defensive at the beginning but diffused in the end. At the end, there was peace between her and (the Director).

*Interpersonal frustration.* When asked how people disagreeing affects her work experience, one team member said:

You get to know personalities and who you’re going to share with. (One colleague) and I have a love-hate (work relationship) which is a lot lately. Sometimes we don’t always want to talk to each other. We do things differently. We’ve established that. We all approach our work differently.

Another team member said:

I love (a particular coworker), but she and I clash in our outlook. She wants her role clearly defined. She would argue with me about (how to arrange our office area for workflow) (She) has to have everything just so. That’s an obsessive-compulsive thing to me. To me, some things are just not important. (During another conflict,) I brought (the Director) into it, (but then) it became a power play. (My coworker) wants to delegate to me. I’m willing to work with her to (compromise and come to an understanding), but if she made up her mind, she (won’t budge) until people give in. Because it’s not worth the argument. It’s not worth the energy.
Am I happy? Heck, yeah. Do I love (this coworker)? Yes. Do I somewhat understand her perspective about being controlling? Yes, because it’s how she survived. That’s what great about working for a human organization.

**Data analysis: Engaging in open dialogue.** Another empirical indicator for Model II learned social behaviors is engaging in open dialogue. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree with the statement:

“When people at NSC have a difference of opinion, they have an open and honest conversation about it.” The responses revealed that 33.33-percent agreed (i.e., a rating of four on a five-point Likert scale), and 11.11-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, although the Likert responses may have been more generous than the narrative data in indicating the presence of open dialogue.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. While the Likert responses were consistent overall albeit somewhat more generous than the narrative data, the 75-percent threshold was not reached. Only 44.44-percent agreed or strongly agreed that the organization engages in open dialogue. Therefore, this study’s findings did not support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, engages in open dialogue, one empirical indicator of Model II learned social behaviors.

**Asking questions to seek understanding.** The narrative data revealed that NSC colleagues ask each other questions because they consider individuals to be content experts. They seek a specific colleague to ask questions about a particular topic to help clients or clients’
family members identify specific information or to help clients or their family members resolve a problem. In the narratives, team members talked about asking content-specific questions to the designated experts on that particular topic. For example, one team member said, “I think that happens more often than not. (We) seek each other out for a number of things. When (we) know that somebody is more of an authority knowledgeable (about their particular area of expertise) (we) seek one another out.”

In contrast, only a few narratives talked about asking questions to discuss how the colleagues work together. One team member did say, “When I talk with (a specific NSC colleague), if we have a difference of opinion, I say, ‘Explain to me why we have a good relationship. We want to see each other’s perspective.’”

Another colleague said, “You can see their point-of-view from that where their logic is coming from. Sometimes after you’ve heard that, it changes your (perspective).”

One team member said:

Well, not everybody is going to be transparent. You can always see into somebody’s head. If something is going on, if they seem hesitant to answer a question or if they act differently than they usually do obvious differences in character recognizing those things and having that conversation. Asking: ‘Is everything okay? Knowing that not everyone going to come out and tell you things. If you have a problem, just come out and ask them. Otherwise you’re never going to know for sure.

**Data analysis: Asking questions to seek understanding.** Another of the seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors is asking questions to seek understanding. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: “At NSC, people seek to understand each other.”
perspectives by asking questions. The responses revealed that 66.67-percent agreed (i.e., a Likert response of four on a five-point scale), and 11.11-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 77.78-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses. Therefore, this study’s findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, asks questions to seek understanding, one empirical indicator of Model II learned social behaviors.

**Listening or observing to seek understanding.** For the most part, team members agreed that they listen or observe to seek understanding. However, there was a difference in perspective regarding active listening. One team member said, “I think it has a lot to do with the language we use, particularly when it might be a disagreement. I think it involves active listening: ‘So what I hear you saying is?’ Indicates understanding.”

In contrast, another team member commented, “Active listening isn’t good in general. Not just at NSC.”

Other than that difference in perspective, most perspectives were aligned. One team member said, “I agree they do (listen). We all want to find out what people are doing how, what, when, where, why. For all different reasons We have three types of personalities here: (a) jockeying for position, (b) assertive, (c) quiet watchers.”
In reflecting on the listening and observing aspects of relationships, a team member said: That’s how I hope we can come closer together. There are times when we need help being assertive, taking the lead, or being quiet and listening. And that’s even funny with the mindset (of having a professional background in organizations with tall hierarchy structures). Usually you have a very strict chain-of-command.

Listening to colleagues was also identified as a vehicle to open one’s mind to other perspectives. One team member said, “(W)e listen to (each other’s) ideas. Establish what we need. If something doesn’t make sense, I’ll say it. But we listen to each other.”

Another team member said:

Maybe you are looking at it blind-sided. There’s always two sides to every story. It just good to hear the other person’s (perspective). Sometimes you hear it, and you’ve never looked at it that way before, and it makes more sense than what you were thinking.

The key is seeking to understand, as pointed out by one colleague. “I think the basic component of it is not interrupting. Letting someone finish (her) thought, even if you realize that you disagree. You’re more concerned about understanding that other person, rather than being understood.”

Similarly, another colleague said, “I’m who watches. When I hear someone saying one thing, but I see their actions are different, I notice that.”

Talking about the importance of demonstrating listening behaviors, one team member said:

When we have staff meetings, everybody has an opportunity to talk. When you are that person who has the opportunity, everyone is silent, attentive, and gives eye contact.
Everybody is good about that. When I talk to other people, I try to be attentive and present with them. Because I know how much that means to me when people talk to me and their mind isn’t somewhere else.

Marcia also talked about observing in order to understand others’ positions. She said, “With my past, (I have a) survival instinct. I have to know everyone’s position. I won’t snoop. I’m an observer. I’m learning how to use those skills in other ways now. Working here has helped me personally.”

Another team member talked about being receptive to instances people don’t want to talk. “I can tell with people’s body language if they’re getting agitated, so I don’t push it.”

Similarly, Pat described a keenness to know when people need someone to listen and “a shoulder to cry on or an ear to listen.”

Data analysis: Listening or observing to seek understanding. The sixth of seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors is listening or observing to seek understanding. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: “At NSC, people seek to understand each other’s perspectives by listening.” The responses revealed that 66.67-percent agreed (i.e., a Likert response of four on a five-point scale), and 11.11-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert
question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 77.78-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses. Therefore, this study’s findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, listens and observes to seek understanding, one empirical indicator of Model II learned social behaviors.

**Treating people with respect.** The team talked a great deal about the integration of respect within the culture. Sara said, “I have been treated with a default of respect, and I think most people have. People’s (professional) backgrounds have garnered respect right off the bat.”

Respect was identified more than any other construct as an unwritten rule central to NSC. When asked about the unwritten rules at NSC about the way people should interact, one team member said:

> Every organization has its own standards, mores, unwritten rules—(We have a) great respect for each other. Everyone is attuned to the feelings of others. Everyone has bad days, and we respect that. We rally around each other to make their day better. Again, I haven’t seen (people having bad days very often).

In describing the unwritten rules about the way people should interact at NSC, one team member said:

> The main thing is just to be considerate. If they have their (headphones) on, you need to be at a place where they can recognize you (before you begin speaking). For (another colleague), if she has (the) red (sign) on the door, I don’t come in. If it’s (the) green (sign), I can come in. For (the Director), I let her finish a thought before I talk. The main thing is be considerate about their work.
As an element of respect, Pat said, ‘I have yet to hear anything that is politically incorrect. I haven’t heard anything that’s inappropriate. Nothing that’s offensive… I hope not to anyone.’

Marcia said:

We have corporate rules (to treat people with) respect. But here, I think it’s more than just respect. Not to cradle or coddle, but to understand that we’ve been injured in some way (before coming here). I wouldn’t call it nurturing… but maybe a safety net. We provide that for each other as much as we can.

Data analysis: Treating people with respect. The last of the seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors is treating people with respect. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: ‘At NSC, people treat each other with respect.’ The responses revealed that 66.67-percent agreed (i.e., a Likert response of four on a five-point scale), and 33.33-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 100-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses.

Therefore, this study’s findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, treats people with respect, one empirical indicator of Model II learned social behaviors.
Data analysis: Model II learned social behaviors. Of the seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors, five empirical indicators were supported by this study’s findings. The following indicators were supported: (a) including people to develop belongingness, (b) inviting people to share their ideas and talents, (c) asking questions to seek understanding, (d) listening or observing to seek understanding, and (e) treating people with respect. The following empirical indicators were not supported by this study because they failed to meet the minimum 75-percent threshold of individuals who agreed or strongly agreed with their presence: (a) providing freedom to disagree and (b) engaging in open dialogue. All empirical indicators—both those supported by the study and those not supported by the study—demonstrated construct validity through methods triangulation.

Model II Outcomes

Model II outcomes is a unit of analysis that includes four empirical indicators: (a) problem resolution, (b) productive learning and change, (c) peace, and (d) trust.

Problem resolution. One team member described problem resolution as “talking things out” to solve the problem. She added:

I didn’t always agree with (the how the recent staffing transition played out). I hoped that we could have all talked it out. Both of them (the staff members who left) had such great ideas. And I don’t know the whole story, so I can’t make a just call.

Also citing the recent departure of the two staff members, one team member said:

We’ve had a couple (staff members leave) here, and that probably created some hard feelings with some of the employees. We’ve certainly had discussions about that. It’s one of those issues for me personally, I understand. When you throw all these people
together with a new organization, some of those personalities...(some people may leave.)

People move past that.

In contract, one team member believed that the departure of the two staff members was the only way to resolve the interpersonal problems that the team was experiencing. The team member said that the two staff members didn’t seem receptive to talking things through, being courteous of other people, and working things out.

A colleague talked about adaptability to change to heal from the period when the team experienced escalating interpersonal problems and said, “Problems don’t tend to lay there. We don’t have the time.”

Similarly, another team member talked about the desire to get past the problems and focus on the work: the clients and clients’ families because that’s my #1 priority. As long as we can maintain that relationship, I’m fine with whatever happened.

The healing process must be underway. One team member said, “I openly approach a number of topics with individuals without reservation or fear that there might be negative repercussions.”

A colleague concluded that “there is no tension here, so I’m assuming that if there has been conflict, it’s been resolved.”

Another colleague said:

I can’t think of one thing that hasn’t been resolved. That means that every problem has been resolved. You’re going to have those moments of conflict every once in a while, but having that open dialogue and noticing when another person is having an issue and talking about it in a productive manner is an important way to resolve it.
Data analysis: Problem resolution. The first of four empirical indicators for Model II outcomes is problem resolution. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: "When conflicts occur at NSC, people tend to resolve the problem." The responses revealed that 66.67-percent agreed (i.e., a Likert response of four on a five-point scale), and 22.22-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 88.89-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses. Therefore, this study’s findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, experiences problem resolution, one empirical indicator of Model II outcomes.

Productive learning and change. Sara said:

I think that that’s pretty normal for an emerging organization (to experience challenges with interpersonal relationships). I would wonder how authentic relationships were if there weren’t any of those challenges. [She paused.] I would say that my interactions with people (are overall) very positive.

Learning about each other. Marcia talked about learning from both colleagues and the people whom NSC serves:
You learn the minute you hit the door in the morning. You learn to be flexible. You learn to trust your instincts. (You learn through) discussions with other members of our staff. You learn by reaching out into the community, trying to help the clients and families. There has been so much I’ve learned just by making phone calls. With differences in staff—their experiences—you can’t help but absorb all the conversations. You learn constantly.

Kelly concurred:

I know I learn a lot personally from all the personalities (of the people who work here). Everyone comes from a different place. I learn a lot from their (diverse) life experiences. I learn about life in general, about experiences I’ll never have. They have a lot to offer. I also learn from the (clients) who come in.

At different events we have, you see the teamwork a lot more clearly. We designate roles. Before we have an event we (identify roles and responsibilities) by signing up for what we feel most comfortable doing. But it doesn’t always happen like (we planned). During (the event), everyone rolls with the punches and figures out where to pick up the slack. We learn to work as a team. I think that we have pretty good teamwork.

Providing another example, one team member talked about the database project, which is designed to be a national, one-stop information source for a variety of resources for clients and their family members needing help. She said:

Right now, we’re putting together database instructions. It’s interesting how many different ideas (there are) for gathering information. All three of us (who are working on the project) had different ideas for how to gather the information. Something as simple as
(what types of categories of) information we all use someday. We're all willing to learn from each other. That's nice. One person thinks of one thing, and someone else thinks of something else.

Another team member talked about the peer learning that occurs as colleagues engage in organization-wide training on issues that affect clients and their families:

Sometimes (discussion about touchy subjects) can get heated. And I would say that they're usually initiated by some outside sources, like training or someone making an outside comment. Because we're working with clients (many of whom have had controversial life circumstances), sometimes people will make a comment (i.e., a judgment). They make comments I let them. I will speak up and be corrective (to help people to see other clients' perspectives). I've noticed with some of our trainings in the Education Center, someone will make a comment in the training, (and) it will start a discussion, a 30-minute conversation. You learn a lot about people. We can blow off steam. We have an opinion about what we've heard. We can talk and chatter. It reminds me that we are different, but it's like team-building. It's kind of neat. (There) can be depressing topics in training, but we have fun. (The male team member) contributes his male perspective on some things, and (the female team members) contribute the female perspectives. I look forward to hearing what they're going to say or do. It's constant learning.

**Learning about self.** Team members also learn from conflict. One team member said:

Because of the conflicts between (a colleague) and me, I used them as an opportunity to do some self-reflection. I have contributed (to the problem). Not giving (the colleague)
my full attention when I’ve been overwhelmed (with the work) She might have felt disrespected.

When asked where a team member was at with the healing process following the recent staffing transition, the team member shared:

I first felt sort of attacked because I was considered a favorite. I work independently but reach out for help when needed. Clients and (their) family members are counting on me. I have tried to be more open. At times I too am frustrated. Sometimes you learn in your emotional growth. There’s an undercurrent there.

**Change: Building this young organization.** Several team members commented on the newness of the organization, which opened just eight months prior. Kim said, "We have a good mission, a good purpose, for a small, just-getting-started organization. Just getting this going off the ground."

When NSC was launched, the organization grew the staff by applying for and receiving several awards for grant-funded positions through AmeriCorps and the U.S. Department of Labor. Of the participating staff, seven have positions that are externally funded by one-year grants. The one-year nature of the grant-funded positions at NSC has created some uncertainty. Kim said, "Who will be here next year? That’s the thing with jobs like this (with one-year grant-funded positions). People come in and out."

Looking at the big picture, Pat said, "NSC is constantly changing. Constantly morphing."
Elaborating on this theme, Teri said:

It's a new business, just starting out, so there are lots to learn. In another month or even six months, it will be even that much more different. I would like to see more clients coming in (each day), but that will come.

For the team to learn from the interpersonal tension that they had previously experienced, the Director plans to provide training. The purpose is two-fold: to prompt the team to reflect on their learning and to intentionally shape the organization culture by building team relationships that focus on team members' strengths and contributions. NSC's Internal Consultant said, "One of the things I've been asked to do is training on emotional intelligence. EI comes out of positive psychology: what strengths we have to offer one another, to build this organization well."

Looking toward the future, the Director said, "Staff issues created distraction from (NSC's) mission. We got away from the mission, and now we're refocusing on our mission."

**Data analysis: Productive learning and change.** Another of the four empirical indicators for Model II outcomes is productive learning and change. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: "When people disagree at NSC, it prompts discussion that results in productive learning and change." The responses revealed that 44.44-percent agreed (i.e., a Likert response of four on a five-point scale), and 11.11-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert
question. While the qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question, a total of only 55.55-percent of the team indicated a four or five Likert response. Therefore, this study’s findings did not support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, experiences productive learning and change, one empirical indicator of Model II outcomes.

**Peace.** Describing problem resolution as “acceptance” and “personal growth,” one colleague said:

I guess I am at peace. I have done those self-reflections. I’ve done what I thought I could do. I think (my colleague) and I could have gone ‘great guns’ on (a work project) if we could have worked together better. I feel like I’ve grown, so I think I’m at peace. It’s good to reflect and to think about how people perceive what I’m saying or what I’m doing.

Another team member talked about making a choice not to allow conflict to consume oneself and, instead, to make a choice for peace. The team member provided the following perspective:

I just don’t let that affect me. I do my job to the best of my ability. The pettiness of other things is insignificant to me personally. I’m always willing to listen. But at end of the day, it doesn’t bother me. In the big picture, some of this is pretty petty stuff. I’ve been through (major, life-changing experiences) and a divorce.

**Data analysis: Peace.** Another empirical indicator for Model II outcomes is peace. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: “I feel a sense of peace about my relationships with NSC colleagues because we work in harmony.” The responses revealed that 66.67-percent agreed (i.e., a Likert response of four on a five-point scale), and 22.22-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert
response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 88.89-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses. Therefore, this study’s findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, experiences peace, one empirical indicator of Model II outcomes.

Trust. For the most part, the trust among NSC colleagues is strong. The turmoil surrounding the departure of two staff members led people to put up a guard, making trust fragile. Among some individuals, the departure of the two staff members negatively affected trust. Independent of that issue, interpersonal friction occasionally flares among a pair of colleagues who tend to have different perspectives. The Director is taking steps to deliberately build trust amongst the team, strengthening already positive relationships and repairing those that are broken.

Trusting relationships. One team member said:

I trust whatever (a particular colleague) tells meÉ I so respect her. I trust her completely.

I think sheÉ so amazing, so smart, such an intelligent woman. I so appreciate the time and energy she givesÉ I have the highest respect for her.

Another team member, reflecting on her relationship with the Director, said, ÉThereÉ a lot of trust.É She added, É(The Director) trusts my judgment.É
Broken trust and lingering hurt. One team member described a particular colleague by saying, ‘I’ve never had to worry about (this colleague) stabbing me in the back, which isn’t necessarily true about everybody here.’

A team member said:

I was supposed to be in charge of (a particular project), but (a colleague) didn’t want that. If I disagree with her, she’s not happy about that. She did go to (the Director) and complained about me, and that hurt my feelings. I enjoy her. She has a wicked sense of humor. It was a trust thing. It violated my trust. She inferred that I wasn’t trustworthy.

Rebuilding trust. When asked how people get along at NSC, one team member responded:

I’d say extremely well, considering some of the stressors and the (outside) people we work with. Because NSC is so new and has grown so quickly, sometimes people were jockeying for positions. Instead of accepting that (they were not in charge), they became negative. Some trust was broken.

The researcher then asked what it will take to rebuild that trust. The team member responded, ‘Those that are committed, we understand that things are going to happen. We understand that it may not be anything that we had done. That person may just not have been happy. Not a good fit.’

When asked what the social atmosphere is like, one team member said:

Oh, wow. You connect with people with things that people like to do. Sharing things that we enjoy. Sharing things outside of work, not real personal, just fun things. We cook together. I have a group Monday mornings, and we rotate. We cook for clients and if we have a birthday coming up, we bake a cake. I have learned more about people their
lives, accomplishments, disappointments by cooking. You let your guard down. It is comforting. It brings in a warmth, where we can just talk. Part of that helps to rebuild the trust that was hurt when we had (interpersonal problems, and staff members left the organization). It helps me identify where people are there with the healing process. To build that trust, I won’t discuss what said, even with (the Director).

**Data analysis: Trust.** The last of four empirical indicators for Model II outcomes is trust. During the interviews, team members were asked to provide a Likert response to rate the extent to which they agree to the statement: “I trust my colleagues at NSC.” The responses revealed that 77.78-percent agreed (i.e., a Likert response of four on a five-point scale), and 22.22-percent strongly agreed (i.e., a Likert response of five). Overall, the narrative interview responses were consistent with the distribution of Likert responses related to this empirical indicator, demonstrating construct validity through methods triangulation.

Per the data analysis protocol, the empirical indicator was supported if it met both of the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 75-percent of individuals indicated a four or five Likert-scale response and (b) qualitative data was consistent overall with the responses to the Likert question. Both criteria were met, with a total of 100-percent of the team indicating a four or five Likert response, and the qualitative data being consistent overall with the Likert responses. Therefore, this study’s findings did support theory that NSC, as a learning organization, experiences trust, one empirical indicator of Model II outcomes.

**Case Data Analysis: System-Wide Observations**

Yin (2009) identified a common error made by researchers using an embedded single-case study design: the exclusive focus on individual-level data and the failure to analyze aggregate data to explain the case as a whole. In addition to aggregate quantitative data, a
summary of aggregate qualitative data is provided in the form of system-wide observations made by the researcher. The goal was to provide a holistic picture of the National Service Coalition, from the organization’s launch through the time that NSC was studied for this research.

**Organization Launch: The Honeymoon Period**

The Director had long dreamed of obtaining a facility to operate the National Service Coalition, transforming it from a small referral-based organization operating on an ad hoc basis out of her home to a fully operational enterprise with a staff and facility. In mid-2012, the National Service Coalition was launched. A great deal of excitement surrounded the start of this organization. NSC immediately grew to a full-fledged organization with a name, a beautiful facility, a newly hired staff of nine people, and initial plans to launch additional NSC sites in other regions within the United States.

The organization’s launch was marked by a period of excitement and hope for the future. The team was energized by the mission of the organization and focused on their roles for contributing to that mission. The organization exhibited what appeared to be Model II learned social behaviors. People were included socially, and they were invited to share their ideas and talents. They were encouraged to openly dialogue and ask questions. An expectation of respect was and continues to be among the unwritten rules held most strongly by the NSC culture.

Because the organization culture was not studied during that period immediately after NSC launched, it is difficult to know whether Model II values were, in fact, driving the Model II behaviors or whether Model I behaviors were simply suppressed during the honeymoon period of the new organization.
End of the Honeymoon

Two or three months after the organization’s launch, a rift began to emerge in the organization, signifying the end of the honeymoon period. This rift coincided with the emergence of Model I behaviors. Two staff members—the two staff members who later left the organization (and were not interviewed as part of this study)—were cited as using passive-aggressive tactics to target the Director with strategies to compete for recognition and undermine the Director’s leadership. A silo was constructed, and the two staff members accumulated social capital through what appeared to be in-group/out-group strategies. The staff was divided into three distinct groups: the in-group, the out-group, and a neutral group (see Table 17).

Table 17
Division among NSC Staff during the Crisis Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Staff member quantity</th>
<th>Socio-cognitive systems learning pattern</th>
<th>Group description</th>
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</table>
| In-Group    | 5                     | Model I                                  | The in-group comprised a silo that was divided from the Director and the Director’s supporters. The in-group was led by two staff members who later left NSC.  
The two leaders of the in-group appeared to use a variety of Model I behaviors to perpetuate the staff division: competing for recognition and influence and accumulating social capital. The following Model I behaviors were apparent not only among the two leaders of the in-group but also among other members of the group: espousing respect but behaving passive-aggressively to exert unilateral control, threaten, or punish members of the out-group, as well as using fancy footwork to justify their behavior and make the behavior undiscussable. Members of the in-group did not appear to seek resolution to repair the dividedness. (See Chapter 5 for discussion and examples of their Model I behavior.)  
However, after the two leaders of the in-group left the organization, the remaining members of the in-group did appear to be open, though somewhat hesitant, to the resolution that was initiated by members of the out-group and the neutral group. |
The Director and two staff members, who had strong existing relationships with the Director, comprised the out-group. They were the primary targets for the in-group's passive-aggressive behavior and competition for unilateral control. Members of the out-group appeared to be blind-sided by the divisive and passive-aggressive behavior. Members of the out-group did not appear to construct a silo. Instead, they sought to resolve the dividedness.

None of the three members of the neutral group was approached to support the in-group. Neither were they targeted by the in-group. Two of the three members of the neutral group were supporters of the Director. One of those individuals was presumably not targeted by the in-group due to a positive, existing relationship with one leader of the in-group. The underlying rationale for the other neutral member to avoid becoming a target of the in-group was unknown.

On the surface, people carried on with staff meetings and other day-to-day interactions, suppressing negativity and maintaining strained relationships as undiscussable. Below the surface, passive-aggressive behaviors fueled the conflict. A crisis occurred. Problems escalated as tension grew and relationships were divided. People experienced pain and frustration, as well as mistrust. As the tension climaxed, the two leaders of the in-group left the organization, each at a different time but spaced within a couple months of each other. Their departure received a mixed reaction. The remaining members of the in-group expressed disappointment and regret that the situation was not positively resolved with the two staff members remaining at NSC. The overall sentiment, among those disappointed that the two staff members left, was described by one team member: "(A couple team members left), and none of us were real happy about that, but we all agreed that (the Director is) the boss, and what she says goes, and there has to be rules."

Members of the out-group and at least one member of the neutral group were relieved by the departure of the two staff members. Among the out-group and neutral group, the overall
sentiment was relief from the escalating tension, as well as hope for resolving the crisis and repairing the division among staff.

**Current Status**

The Director and remaining staff members had begun the process to dissolve the dividedness between the in-group, out-group, and neutral group. Residual hurt was evident, particularly among members of the former out-group. However, the process of mending relationships and healing had begun. This relationship mending process appeared to be initiated almost exclusively by members of the former out-group and the former neutral group. Though the remaining members of the in-group did not initiate relationship mending, they appeared to be open to resolution. In describing the current work atmosphere, one team member said, ÒI think it’s better now than what it was. I really felt a divide before... I feel that the toxic part we’ve at least corralled. For the most part, the others get along good.Ó

**Significance of Findings**

**Construct Validity**

One significant aspect of the findings was the consistency demonstrated between the quantitative, Likert responses and the qualitative data. For this study, new measures were used to test the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Through methods triangulation, the findings demonstrated construct validity for the measures.

**Internal Validity**

Internal validity was demonstrated by the complex chain of events of a logic model. The socio-cognitive systems learning model demonstrated the tenets of a logic model, in which each event served as both a dependent variable that relied upon the preceding construct, while also serving as an independent variable to the construct that
succeeded it. For example, using the laws of interaction, Model II behaviors served as a dependent variable to Model II values (i.e., the independent variable). In addition, Model II behaviors served as an independent variable to Model II outcomes (i.e., the dependent variable). This logic model depicts a "complex chain of events" [which are] staged in repeated cause-effect-cause-effect patterns (Yin, 2009, p. 149).

Aggregate data analysis tested theory support. The findings indicated that a least one empirical indicator was unsupported for each unit of analysis (see Table 18). The findings at

Table 18

*In addition to the interview questions listed as qualitative data sources, the following data sources produced qualitative data for any empirical indicator: direct observation and document review.
NSC did not support the testing of assumptions, the empirical indicator for Model II values. Based on the complex chain of events of the socio-cognitive systems learning model, if an organization does not demonstrate the testing of assumptions, the researcher would expect that at least one empirical indicator for each other unit would not be supported. In keeping with the socio-cognitive systems learning model, failure to test assumptions and exemplify Model II values led to a few problems with learned social behaviors and outcomes. However, it should be noted that NSC did demonstrate five of the seven empirical indicators for Model II learned social behaviors and three of the four empirical indicators for Model II outcomes.

**Empirical Indicators Not Supported**

The findings indicated that the following empirical indicators were not supported: testing assumptions, providing freedom to disagree, engaging in open dialogue, and productive learning and change.

**Moderately below 75-percent threshold.** Of these four indicators, two empirical indicators—testing assumptions and providing freedom to disagree—received ratings only slightly below the 75-percent threshold. A total of 66.67-percent of team members responded that they either agreed or strongly agreed that people at NSC tested their assumptions. In addition, team members indicated that they were somewhat comfortable or very comfortable to disagree with 70.89-percent of colleagues at NSC.

**Significantly below 75-percent threshold.** Of the four empirical indicators that were not supported, two were significantly below the 75-percent threshold required for theory support. A total of 44.44-percent of team members either agreed or strongly agreed that people at NSC engage in open dialogue. Additionally, only 55.55-percent of team members either agreed or
strongly agreed that people at NSC experience the Model II outcome of productive learning and change.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Human beings are designed for learning (Senge, 2006b, p. 765).

Yet most people don’t know how to learn (Argyris, 2006b, p. 267).

This paradox draws attention to the dissonance between humans’ innate design to learn and the Model I, anti-learning practices that are prevalent in the dominant American culture. Humans are designed to learn experientially from the “patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 3) related to human interaction. However, the dominant American culture is blind to the social learning aspect of the human condition. Instead of approaching learning as communicative, learning is approached almost exclusively from a task perspective (Habermas, 1984, as cited in Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow, 2000, 2003). The Western culture, along with the typical organization culture in Western organizations, demonstrates cultural patterns for focusing on task learning and applying instrumental learning strategies to social situations. Furthermore, the culture enforces social rules that make this dissonance undiscussable (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). These are characteristics of the default socio-cognitive pattern in the U.S.: the Model I socio-cognitive process (Edmondson, 1996).

Building upon the work of Argyris (2000, 2004, 2010) and his colleague, Schön (1996), this study began with the development of a socio-cognitive systems learning model. This model compares the egocentric, Model I socio-cognitive process that is so prevalent in the U.S. to an alternative, wholeness-oriented approach, the Model II socio-cognitive process.

The purpose of this study was to better understand and explain organization learning by creating a model to: (a) diagram the essence of Argyris’(2000) theory, incorporating the contributions of other authors (e.g., Parker Palmer, Albert Bandura, Edgar Schein) and adding
the mutual constitution of culture to the theory, (b) using the model to make predictions about the values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes of a learning organization, and (c) empirically testing those predictions.

This research studied only one segment of the socio-cognitive systems learning model: the Model II process of learning organizations. The National Service Coalition was then studied as the site organization for the single-case study in order to test the empirical indicators of the Model II socio-cognitive process, the hallmark of a learning organization.

**Research Question**

The research question guiding this study was: Which patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes are needed for an organization to be a learning organization?

**Summary of Findings**

A learning organization was defined by Argyris and Schön (1996) as an organization with the ability to see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (p. xix). The socio-cognitive systems learning model was developed in order to illustrate this process.

NSC met the learning organization criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008) and was thus confirmed as a learning organization during the focus group prior to the study. As a learning organization, NSC's values, behaviors, and patterns should have mirrored the Model II socio-cognitive process depicted in the model. However, the findings presented some surprises. The findings revealed patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes that resembled but did not mirror the Model II socio-cognitive process. Most elements of the model were supported by the findings. However, some variances were evident. See Figure 5 (below) for a graphic
representation of the socio-cognitive systems learning model. In this figure, the four empirical indicators that were not supported by the findings were denoted by strikethrough text.

**Significance of the Research**

The theory was that learning organizations demonstrate the Model II socio-cognitive process depicted in the model. If NSC was confirmed as a learning organization using the criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008), NSC should have reflected the Model II patterns of values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes. While NSC’s socio-cognitive patterns resembled Model II overall, there were discrepancies between the model and some of the findings. What accounted for these discrepancies?

Potential explanations for these discrepancies include: (a) the learning organization criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008) may not be valid, or the method for confirming these criteria may have been problematic, (b) the socio-cognitive systems learning model may not be representative of Model II patterns, (c) the 75-percent threshold for determining theory support may not be the optimum threshold, (d) expecting an organization to perfectly meet all empirical indicators of the model may be unrealistic, (e) the National Service Coalition may not be a Model II organization, or (f) NSC may be a Model II organization that experienced Model I traps but is undergoing a transformative learning process to renew its commitment to Model II. Each of these potential explanations is discussed below.

**Appropriateness of Learning Organization Criteria and Method?**

One potential explanation of the discrepancy between the theory and the findings may be a potential problem with the confirmation of the learning organization status, the prerequisite for the study. The learning organization criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008) and the measure did appear to be appropriate. However, the focus group method should be examined to determine
whether a focus group is an appropriate method for eliciting examples that are reflective of real values, rather than espoused values.

**Validity of learning organization criteria.** As a prerequisite for the study, the case was confirmed as a learning organization using the criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008). According to the theory, an organization confirmed as a learning organization using these criteria should also reflect the Model II patterns of values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes. The learning organization criteria appeared to be appropriate. Nonetheless, the validity of these learning organization criteria was unknown and, presumably, untested. Future research should independently test the learning organization criteria in order to establish validity.

**Appropriateness of method.** The learning organization criteria were confirmed through a focus group, comprised of five team members, including the Director. However, it is not clear whether this method was effective in untangling espoused and real values. The following questions remain unanswered: (a) Did the public nature of a focus group elicit only data that supports espoused values? (b) Was the nature of a focus group conducive to encouraging individuals to put down their guard and share examples of behavior that conflict with espoused values? (c) Did the Director's presence influence the responses? (d) Did the focus group promote groupthink? (e) Was trust not yet established between each team member and the researcher, making the team members more guarded and preventing them from divulging anything other than espoused values? These are all questions that call for further research to determine if a focus group is an appropriate method for confirming the learning organization criteria.

**Validity of measure to confirm learning organization status.** The measure to confirm learning organization status was developed for this study, based upon the criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008). The focus group questions appear to be appropriate for testing learning
organization criteria. However, future research should independently test the focus group questions in order to establish validity.

**Socio-Cognitive Systems Learning Model: Representative of Model II?**

Another potential explanation for the discrepancies between the theory and the findings may be that the socio-cognitive systems learning model is not representative of Model II patterns. However, the review of the literature suggested otherwise. The model integrated the spirit of Argyris (2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996) theory, while also incorporating the elements of culture and the work of notable theorists such as Bandura (2002) and Palmer (2004, 2011).

A total of 66.67-percent of the empirical indicators were supported in this study’s findings. While the findings did not demonstrate full support of the model, the findings did demonstrate partial support of the model. This suggests that ruling out the socio-cognitive systems learning model would be premature. Further research is needed to establish analytic generalization, testing whether the socio-cognitive systems learning model is representative of Model II.

**75-percent Threshold Optimal to Establish Theory Support?**

One potential explanation for the discrepancy between the theory and this study’s findings may be the threshold used to establish support of the theory. Theory support was distinguished by a minimum of 75-percent of team members agreeing or strongly agreeing that the empirical indicator was present at NSC. Because this was an inaugural study, selection of the threshold for distinguishing theory support was somewhat arbitrary. Of the four empirical indicators that were not supported, two were only moderately less than the 75-percent threshold: testing assumptions and freedom to disagree. A total of 66.67-percent of team members agreed
or strongly agreed that people at NSC test their assumptions. For freedom to disagree, team members indicated that they would be somewhat comfortable or very comfortable to disagree with 70.89-percent of their NSC colleagues.

While the 75-percent threshold is not glaringly inappropriate, the theory support threshold warrants future attention. Future case studies should continue to use the 75-percent threshold and analyze the distribution of theory support across cases or across studies, in the instance of single-case studies in order to identify the ideal point-of-distinction between theory support and lack of theory support. This analysis may also lend insight into whether the threshold levels should vary by empirical indicator. Following extensive research on the distribution of theory support percentages by empirical indicator, threshold adjustments may be considered.

**Realistic to Expect Findings to Perfectly Reflect the Model?**

Another potential explanation for the discrepancy between the theory and the findings may be linked to the research design. This study's research design called for theory support of each empirical indicator in order to demonstrate the unit of analysis. Perhaps that is unrealistic.

The Model II process is a system state that includes the following three criteria identified by Dubin (1969): inclusiveness, determinance, and persistence. Inclusiveness means that all units of the theory will be part of a system state; therefore, all units must be present in order to support the theory that the organization uses the Model II process. The Model II process has demonstrated determinance, meaning that the collection of units is measurable and distinctive. The third criterion of the system state is that the Model II process must persist over time. Similarly, the Model II socio-cognitive process is expected to persist over time, through both times of normal stress and times of heightened stress among people in the organization. This expectation of persistence even through people's varying experiences and degrees of stress
suggests that realistic expectations are important when analyzing people’s socio-cognitive processes in relation to the model.

People are unique. Organizations are comprised of people. Therefore, organizations are unique. The characteristics of learning organizations may vary slightly, even if the majority of their characteristics reflect the socio-cognitive systems learning model. While all units of analysis must be present for a system state, learning organizations may not present all the empirical indicators illustrated in the model.

Humans are complex beings and not likely to think and behave in ideal ways to perfectly reflect the Model II process depicted in the socio-cognitive systems learning model. While all units of analysis must be present in order to reflect the spirit of the Model II socio-cognitive process, perhaps not all the empirical indicators are needed. Further research is recommended to identify the optimum number or the specific empirical indicators that are required to denote the presence of the Model II process.

Not a Model II Organization?

Another potential explanation for the discrepancy between the theory and findings may be that the National Service Coalition is not a Model II organization. This explanation is possible but unlikely. The NSC demonstrated 66.67-percent of the total empirical indicators for the Model II socio-cognitive process. Assessing the support of empirical indicators by unit, the only unit that did not achieve support among the majority of its empirical indicators was Model II values. For Model II learned social behaviors and Model II outcomes, the majority of that unit’s empirical indicators were supported. While the findings did not demonstrate full support of the model, the findings did demonstrate partial support of the model. Therefore,
ruling out NSC as a Model II organization is not recommended. More research, in the form of a repeated study, is recommended to further study NSC’s use of the Model II process.

**A Model II Organization undergoing the Transformative Learning Process?**

Another potential explanation for the differences between the theory and the findings may be that NSC is a Model II organization that demonstrated Model I traps, the introduction of Model I patterns into the organization, but is undergoing a transformative process to renew its commitment to Model II. The socio-cognitive systems learning model was applied to explain the transformative learning process, illustrating the researcher’s observations during the case study of the National Service Coalition (see Figure 6).

Specifically, these observations included Model I traps creeping into NSC, a Model II organization. Individuals veered off-course from Model II to the Model I socio-cognitive process, and they exhibited traps—Model I patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes—fueled by the single-loop learning process. Dissonance festered between some individuals who continued to follow Model II norms and the other individuals who demonstrated Model I traps. These patterns continued for three or four months. Dissonance mounted until the clash between the following groups erupted in crisis: individuals committed to the Model II organization norms and individuals who had veered off-course to practice Model I traps. The crisis presented a choice between either succumbing to the traps—becoming entrenched in Model I—or committing to Model II as the route to productive learning and change. Each component of the transformative learning process observed by the researcher is explained in detail below, beginning with NSC’s status as a Model II organization.

**Model II organization status.** When the National Service Coalition was launched, Model II behaviors were evident. Whether the Model II process was in place at that time, or
Figure 6. Transformative learning in a Model II organization: An application of the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Adapted from J. P. Conbere, personal communication, June 18, 2013. In this case study, the researcher observed that Model I traps from the dominant societal culture crept into the Model II organization. In response, dissonance festered between: (a) individuals practicing the Model II cultural norms and (b) individuals practicing Model I patterns in violation of organization norms. Dissonance grew until the situation erupted in crisis. "Crisis" comes from the Greek "krisis," which literally means "choice" (J. P. Conbere, personal communication, June 18, 2013; Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval). From that crisis, individuals chose to either succumb to the traps (i.e., become entrenched in Model I patterns) or take the path toward productive learning and change (i.e., Model II).
whether Model II behaviors were simply espoused, was not entirely clear. Two to three months after the organization launched, NSC’s normative Model II behaviors were challenged. This occurred as Model I patterns crept into the organization. Argyris (2010) referred to the introduction of Model I patterns as “traps.”

**Model I traps.** Argyris (2010) described traps as Model I patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes that “make it difficult to produce the learning that is required to generate fundamental change” (Argyris, 2010, p. 83). Because Model I is prevalent in the dominant culture (Edmondson, 1996), even learning organizations like the National Service Coalition may be susceptible to Model I traps creeping in from the dominant societal culture.

This susceptibility should not be surprising, since socio-cognitive processes are primed by culture (Oyserman & Lee, 2008), and cultural learning begins at an early age (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Model I is the American cultural default (Edmondson, 1996), and being it is learned at a young age and reinforced by the dominant societal culture, Model I traps may creep into society’s institutions (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010), even a learning organization with a Model II culture. Argyris (2010) noted, “Most individuals, regardless of sex, age, education, or wealth, learn Model I and defensive reasoning through acculturation. They enter organizations skilled at creating traps and accept traps as ‘natural’ (p. 147, author’s emphasis). While individuals may be members of a Model II organization, such as the National Service Coalition, they also navigate the larger societal culture once they exit NSC’s doors at the end of each work day.

The American society not only accepts Model I behaviors but also perpetuates them through single-loop learning, which shields the disconnect between espoused values and the real value of the self in order to avoid scrutiny and the testing of assumptions. The Model II socio-
cognitive process, while espoused by the dominant American culture, is countercultural. Model II is driven by wholeness, while Model I is driven by the desires and goals of the self.

Model I norms crept into the National Service Coalition, and the organization was tested to determine whether it would tolerate the Model I behaviors that are reinforced by the dominant societal culture. Two staff members exerted unilateral control, a hallmark of Model I, by leading the development of an in-group/out-group situation. This was performed by using Model I behavioral strategies, such as: competing for recognition and influence, accumulating social capital, and using passive-aggressive behavior to threaten or punish. By constructing an in-group as a mechanism to build social capital, the two staff members sought control and increased the number of colleagues who would tolerate and even participate in Model I behavior. In addition to behaviors to achieve unilateral control, behaviors at NSC were also demonstrated for defending oneself and one’s espoused values through blame and fancy footwork. Assumption testing was evaded by making all this behavior undiscussable and by suppressing negative feelings and acting as if the behavior was rational. Each behavior that aligned with one of these empirical indicators was a Model I trap (see Table 19).

Table 19

*Model I Traps Experienced by the National Service Coalition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model I empirical indicator</th>
<th>Evidence of Model I</th>
<th>Team member narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compete for recognition and influence</td>
<td>Competition for power</td>
<td>Because NSC is so new and has grown so quickly, sometimes people were jockeying for positions. Instead of accepting that (they were not in charge), they became negative. Some trust was broken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accumulate social capital</td>
<td>Exclusionary alliances</td>
<td>You still get a little cliquey-ness, but you get that anywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threaten or punish</td>
<td>Passive-aggressive manipulation and punishment of others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One team member's behavior was manipulative. She doesn't play well with others. She won't come to your face and tell you she's angry. She puts on this attitude of a five-year-old when candy been taken away.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fancy footwork</th>
<th>Accusation that people experience success because they are among the Director's favorites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††There have been a couple situations when people were more reactionary. More childish couldn't reason.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fancy footwork</th>
<th>Down-playing the problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††I have faith in (the Director). I do get accused of being a favorite.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make all this behavior undiscussable</th>
<th>Sidebar conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After being accused of playing favorites, the Director said, †††No, I have people here who work, and (a couple) people who (need more supervision to stay focused on the work, on the common mission).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make all this behavior undiscussable</th>
<th>Departure of two staff members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††When asked if the Director plays favorites, one team member said, †††No. But I think there's a perception that she doesn't think that people who have demonstrated they are competent and that they are self-directed and (that they) get the vision. They are afforded the opportunity to be self-directed with their work. Those are the people who are accused of receiving privileges because they are favorites. People who have not demonstrated that. They get supervision. It's hard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make all this behavior undiscussable</th>
<th>Sidebar conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††I see them on the (security) cameras, in the corners, whispering. They look guilty and I walk by, and they quickly talking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make all this behavior undiscussable</th>
<th>Sidebar conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††(Sometimes) I've gone out into the open office space, and people stop talking. I know that they're not talking about me. (They're speculating about the staffing transition.) I so badly want to have all the cards out on the table.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make all this behavior undiscussable</th>
<th>Sidebar conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††There is) some touchiness (about the situation surrounding) the two staff who left. It's hard to let the white elephant sit there. It was like walking on pins and needles after they left, but then you decide how you're going to feel about it, and then you move on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make all this behavior undiscussable</th>
<th>Sidebar conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††The only time I noticed (the work atmosphere changing was) when the two people left. The only thing that affected the atmosphere was that I didn't know why they left. Not sure why. So there was a temporary discomfort. Curiosity. The Director was good about keeping confidentiality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make all this behavior undiscussable</th>
<th>Sidebar conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>†††The change in staffing might be a touchy subject. It might be touchy because (we) aren't communicating about it. (There's some) negativity around the office. We don't talk about it with each other. But I feel like other people are talking about it under the table. I want to talk about it freely, but I don't because it might make other people uncomfortable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suppress negative feelings and act as if rational

Act as if everything is always fine

I think it’s an unwritten rule that everyone should have a smile on their face whenever the public may encounter them. Since you don’t know when public will come in, have a smile on your face at all times.

Suppress negative feelings and act as if rational

Feign team unity

An unwritten rule is to give the impression of unity, even if there’s division going on behind the scenes.

Suppress negative feelings and act as if rational

Suppress criticism

An unwritten rule is not having anything negative to say ever.

Model II organization norms. At NSC, dissonance grew between the contradictory existence of Model I traps and the organization’s Model II norms. Model II norms were staunchly held by the Director, members of the out-group, and at least two members of the neutral group. The Model I traps, which were demonstrated primarily by the in-group, clashed with the existing Model II norms. However, some members of the in-group who demonstrated Model I traps also demonstrated Model II behaviors in other contexts at NSC (see Table 20), evidence that the traps had not gained a foothold in the Model II organization culture.

Table 20

_Evidence of a Model II Culture at the National Service Coalition_.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model II empirical indicator</th>
<th>Evidence of Model II</th>
<th>Team member narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing assumptions</td>
<td>Seeking to understand one’s true self &amp; other people through self-reflection</td>
<td>Because of the conflicts between (a colleague) and me, I used them as an opportunity to do some self-reflection. I have contributed (to the problem). Not giving (the colleague) my full attention when I’ve been overwhelmed (with the work). She might have felt disrespected. I guess I am at peace. I have done those self-reflections. I’ve done what I thought I could do. I think (my colleague) and I could have gone great guns (a work project) if we could have worked together better. I feel like I’ve grown, so I think I’m at peace. It’s good to reflect and to think about how people perceive what I’m saying or what I’m doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including people to develop belongingness</td>
<td>Accepting people and providing opportunity for them to fit in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People have their niche. I can see people feeling like they fit in. Their skill sets. Their niche.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a niche that I fill, and I think I fill it pretty well. It’s not that I am perfect because I am still learning and growing in the position. It’s an ever-changing entity (i.e., NSC), and it will continue to grow and develop, as any organization does in its first couple years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think we all have something to offer, to bring to the table. That’s the key.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming here to me was like coming home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling accepted. Feeling like I don’t have to pretend to be someone I am not in order to fit in. It took time to feel comfortable, to feel like I could be myself. That’s been that way in any job I’ve ever had. Thrown in with a bunch of strangers. Need to feel things out. I feel accepted by everyone on staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for input and sharing all the time. That’s something I feel we do a good job at.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an active participant. Sometimes offering those talents up. Sometimes people seek those talents out. My work experience has taught me a lot and sometimes lends a different perspective to some issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I love about my job is pretty much everything… (People) ask for my help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It means that I am valuable, that someone would want to know my ideas, what I have to say, what I think. It puts value on me as a person. The fact that they come to me because I have talents (in areas) that they don’t build me up as well. Knowing I have this thing that another person doesn’t have, and they come to me in that area. And I get to share it. Using talents to build other people up, so they build their talents as well.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When I talk with (a specific NSC colleague), if we have a difference of opinion, I say, ‘Explain to me why.’ We have a good relationship. We want to see each other’s perspective. Trust each other to disagree, to ask questions and listen to others’ points-of-view.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If I feel like there’s any conflict if anyone says something, and something inside of me says I just don’t agree with that. I just want to take care of that and have that dialogue immediately. Not harbor it. I think that’s the best way to get along with anyone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well, not everybody is going to be transparent. You can always see into somebody’s head. If something is going on, if they seem hesitant to answer a question or if they act differently than they usually do obviously differences in character recognizing those things and having that conversation. Asking: ‘Is everything okay?’ Knowing that not everyone going to come out and tell you things. If you have a problem, just come out and ask them. Otherwise you’re never going to know for sure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You can see their point-of-view from that’s where their logic is coming from. Sometimes after you’ve heard that, it changes your (perspective).</td>
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<tr>
<td>If there’s something we don’t know or need to know, we ask. I don’t think anybody holds back.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>Understanding others’ points-of-view</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>Developing a positive rapport &amp; being attentive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening or observing to seek understanding</td>
<td>Treating people like you’d like to be treated (i.e., The Golden Rule)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>Treating people like you’d like to be treated. And I think that’s true of all of us. (That we treat people like we like to be treated.) We do a pretty good job of that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>Everyone (deserves to be treated with respect). Everyone brings something to the table. At NSC, we treat each other with respect pretty much all the time. No one here thinks they’re smarter than anyone else. Even with (a certain colleague’s extensive) knowledge, (that colleague) has never talked down to anyone or made you feel like you were stupid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating people with respect</td>
<td>Building each other up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>Talking through problems, then letting them go</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive learning and change</td>
<td>Discussing problems &amp; mending relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Not having to worry about where one stands with other people</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For example, when we have staff meetings, everybody has an opportunity to talk. When you are that person who has the opportunity, everyone is silent, attentive, and gives eye contact. Everybody is good about that. When I talk to other people, I try to be attentive and present with them. Because I know how much that means to me when people talk to me and their mind isn’t somewhere else.

Listening to understanding others’ points-of-view

Listening to developing a positive rapport & being attentive

Listening to treating people like you’d like to be treated

Listening to treating people like you’d like to be treated (i.e., The Golden Rule)

Listening to building each other up

Listening to talking through problems, then letting them go

Listening to discussing problems & mending relationships

Listening to not having to worry about where one stands with other people

Listening to treating people like you’d like to be treated. And I think that’s true of all of us. (That we treat people like we like to be treated.) We do a pretty good job of that.

Listening to everyone (deserves to be treated with respect). Everyone brings something to the table. At NSC, we treat each other with respect pretty much all the time. No one here thinks they’re smarter than anyone else. Even with (a certain colleague’s extensive) knowledge, (that colleague) has never talked down to anyone or made you feel like you were stupid.

Listening to when you interact, no one putting each other down. There’s a lot of building each other up around here. Respect is evident. It’s something that happens all the time.

Listening to when you can let it go and get back to what we are here to do. Desire to get past the problem and focus on the work, the clients and families, because that’s my #1 priority. As long as we can maintain that relationship, I’m fine with whatever happened.

Listening to we definitely try. (Paraphrased:) I think the two staff members leaving was the only way to resolve the problems we were having. The staff members didn’t seem receptive to talking things through, being courteous of other people, and working things out.

Listening to can think of one thing that hasn’t been resolved. That means that every problem has been resolved. You’re going to have those moments of conflict every once in a while, but having that open dialogue and noticing when another person is having an issue and talking about it in a productive manner is an important way to resolve it.

Listening to where we are on the border of mending (following the recent staff transition). We’re all good people.

Listening to when people disagree at NSC, it prompts discussion that results in productive learning and change.
Crisis. Dissonance grew as a result of the opposing Model I traps and Model II norms at NSC until the dissonance erupted in the form of a crisis. Crisis is defined as "an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending" (Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval). This experience caused distress and pain at NSC, particularly among the in-group and even among the neutral group, and hampered productivity throughout the organization by creating a major distraction from the mission and the service to clients. This period was a time of instability in the organization culture.

The crisis was marked by escalating tension, pain and frustration, and mistrust, all Model I outcomes. Members of the out-group and the neutral group expressed interest in engaging in dialogue to work toward resolution. Yet, this interest in dialoguing was met with exclusionary behaviors, such as gossip and whispering. These are Model I tactics to evade assumption-testing.
by making conflict undiscussable. Even staff members who practiced the Model II socio-cognitive process were relegated to experiencing Model I outcomes—tension, pain and frustration, and mistrust—likely resulting from both the Model I behaviors aimed at some of them and the dissonance that permeated through the organization.

Though the Model II culture was evident, it had been shaken by Model I traps. As dissonance grew between the competing values underlying the Model I and Model II behaviors, the situation was one in which “a decisive change [was] impending” (Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval). Such dissonance could not continue because the Director, members of the out-group, and some members of the neutral group would not tolerate the Model I traps practiced by their colleagues.

Choice. “Crisis” is derived from the Greek word, ἔκρισις, which literally means “choice” (J. P. Conbere, personal communication, June 18, 2013; Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval). The eruption of the crisis signified a “turning point for better or worse” (Merriam-Webster, n.d., online retrieval). The growing dissonance between the Model II culture and the Model I traps could no longer continue, and individuals were met with a choice: (a) align with the Model II culture to seek productive learning and change or (b) succumb to the Model I traps but leave the organization.

NSC staff members responded to the crisis in one of three ways, demonstrating: (a) a willingness to initiate dialogue and work through problems until resolution was reached, (b) a passive willingness to dialogue with others who initiated it, and (c) a lack of willingness to dialogue and abolish the Model I traps (see Table 21). The crisis climaxed with two staff members—the two leaders of the in-group—leaving the organization. They left at different times, but within a short period of each other. The other staff members remained with NSC.
### Choices Made in Response to the Crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group membership</th>
<th>Willingness to dialogue</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Socio-cognitive systems learning pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two leaders of in-group</td>
<td>Lack of willingness to dialogue and abolish Model I traps</td>
<td>Succumbed to traps: Left the organization</td>
<td>Model I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of in-group</td>
<td>Passive willingness to dialogue with others who initiated it</td>
<td>Stalled, prolonging the process for making a choice</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-group</td>
<td>Willingness to initiate dialogue and work toward resolution</td>
<td>Productive learning and change: Committed to reestablishing Model II norms at NSC</td>
<td>Model II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral group</td>
<td>Willingness to initiate dialogue and work toward resolution</td>
<td>Productive learning and change: Committed to reestablishing Model II norms at NSC</td>
<td>Model II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Toward productive learning and change.** Following the crisis, the Director made a conscious effort to work with staff to reestablish the Model II organization norms and repair relationships. From the case study research, four empirical indicators were identified as areas of focus to heal the organization and normalize the Model II socio-cognitive patterns. These four areas were: testing assumptions, providing freedom to disagree, engaging in open dialogue, and productive learning and change.

**Testing assumptions.** Human nature includes the development of assumptions as people make sense of the self, other people, and the environment. At NSC, several assumptions held by individuals throughout the organization—including the former in-group, out-group, and neutral group—were observed by the researcher (see Table 22).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption category</th>
<th>Assumption by former group affiliation</th>
<th>In-group</th>
<th>Out-group</th>
<th>Neutral group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severity of the crisis</strong></td>
<td>The issues among staff weren’t that big of a deal.</td>
<td>The crisis turned the organization upside-down.</td>
<td>The crisis turned the organization upside-down.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circumstances surrounding the two staff members who later left NSC</strong></td>
<td>The Director should have worked harder to work things out with the staff members who later left NSC.</td>
<td>The crisis was caused by the two staff members who later left NSC.</td>
<td>The crisis was caused by the two staff members who later left NSC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal responsibility for the crisis</strong></td>
<td>I am not responsible.</td>
<td>I bear some responsibility. One potential area of responsibility might be an insufficient hiring process, creating an inability to foresee problems before making the hire.</td>
<td>I am not responsible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director playing “favorites”</strong></td>
<td>The Director plays favorites.</td>
<td>The Director does not play favorites. She simply rewards those who work hard by entrusting increased responsibility.</td>
<td>The Director does not play favorites. She simply rewards those who work hard by entrusting increased responsibility.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect among staff</strong></td>
<td>At NSC, we treat each other with respect.</td>
<td>At NSC, we treat each other with respect.</td>
<td>At NSC, we treat each other with respect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate forum for addressing touchy subjects</strong></td>
<td>I talk about touchy subjects with my close coworkers (i.e., through sidebar conversations). At some point, you just make the choice to move on.</td>
<td>We are planning an Emotional Intelligence (EI) training. By learning about EI, hopefully people will recognize that they lacked EI during the crisis. Hopefully they will also make the connection for how they should act going forward.</td>
<td>(Unknown.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td>I won’t let my guard down.</td>
<td>I won’t let my guard down.</td>
<td>I want to trust my coworkers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voicing criticism</strong></td>
<td>We should not say anything negative.</td>
<td>We should not say anything negative.</td>
<td>We should not say anything negative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public image</strong></td>
<td>To the public, act as if everything is fine, that we have no problems.</td>
<td>To the public, act as if everything is fine, that we have no problems.</td>
<td>To the public, act as if everything is fine, that we have no problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Untested assumptions are central to the Model I socio-cognitive process. Yet, even team members who typically demonstrated Model II patterns exhibited some untested assumptions. To recover from the crisis, testing assumptions will be essential to help team members restore trust, root-out dysfunctional Model I strategies, and renew their commitment to Model II. How can this be accomplished? What insight does prior research lend?

**Prior research on Model I to Model II transition.** Research on the transition from the dysfunctional Model I process to the wholeness-oriented Model II process is rare (Argyris, 2010). Conbere and Heorhiadi’s (2006) study offered one of the few examples of this research. They studied a Ukrainian entrepreneurial organization’s socio-cognitive process, following the nation’s cultural shift from Soviet control and oppression to Ukrainian independence and the adoption of Western values.

Conbere and Heorhiadi (2006) found that:

Employees (accepted) change at the strategic and tactical levels. However, the employees did not talk about a deeper level of change which includes not the strategies for the company, but the very way the employees do their work. The deep level of change in a learning organization requires the change in theory-in-use, and this is not what most employees (meant) by change. (p. 238)

Employees at this young, entrepreneurial organization in Ukraine espoused a change toward Model II behaviors. However, the employees’ real values were shrouded by their espoused values, preventing the testing of assumptions. As a result, they were blind to the contradiction between their espoused values and their behaviors. The employees espoused change toward Model II values and behaviors in the era of Ukraine’s newfound independence, but their behaviors were consistent with the status quo behaviors evident during the Soviet
control of Ukraine. While they espoused change, they had not changed. They had not psychologically transitioned to Model II through the testing of assumptions. Conbere and Heorhiadi (2006) found that people tended to focus exclusively on the task elements of change, ignoring the need to test assumptions in order to achieve the productive learning necessary for cultural change. They had not tested their assumptions and did not seek to understand their true selves and other people. Instead, the Model I patterns guarded the contradiction between their espoused values and their behaviors, protecting this contradiction from scrutiny.

The development of a new organization culture is a significant transition in the life of the organization, as well as in the lives of the individual team members. The process of developing organization culture typically includes the subconscious process of forming rules for thought and behavior, most of which are unwritten. These rules include expectations for the ways people interact and perform their work (Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006; Kitayama et al., 2007). Developing an organization culture also typically involves the subconscious process for judging oneself and other people, in order to make sense of how each fits into the organization culture. Essentially, developing an organization culture is based on the development of assumptions about oneself, other people (Bandura, 2002; Kitayama et al., 2007), and rules for thought and behavior (Kitayama et al., 2007). The Model II socio-cognitive process is designed to test those assumptions.

Moving from a Model I organization with socio-cognitive patterns ingrained by the former Soviet control and oppression to a Model II organization culture was a challenging prospect (Argyris, 2010; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). Conbere and Heorhiadi (2006) found that, without intervention, this transition would unlikely be successful. Similarly, Edmondson (1996)
posited, "Employing Model II in interpersonal interactions requires profound attentiveness and skill for human beings socialized in a Model I world." (p. 584).

The majority of team members at the National Service Coalition expressed motivation for creating a healthier organization culture at NSC. Conbere and Heorhiadi's (2006) study found that employees at the organization they researched were also motivated to change, yet they were unsuccessful. The missing link in the Ukrainian entrepreneurial organization at the heart of their study was that the organization neglected to test assumptions.

Without the testing of assumptions, the espoused values will continue to veil the contradiction between espoused values and actual behaviors, and individuals will be blind to their failure to transition from Model I to Model II. "These blindnesses are unlikely to correct themselves without an outside interventionist" (Edmondson, 1996, p. 590). Organization development (OD) intervention (Bartunek et al., 2008; Edmondson, 1996) and the use of a feedback loop through action research (Burke, 2008) are two potential approaches for prompting the testing of assumptions.

**Engaging in open dialogue and providing the freedom to disagree.** Learning to more effectively engage in open dialogue would be a strong vehicle for the testing of assumptions at NSC. Reflecting how relationships were affected by the team's rocky experiences, one team member said:

I think that it's pretty normal for an emerging organization (to experience challenges with interpersonal relationships). I would wonder how authentic relationships were if there weren't any of those challenges. [She paused.] I would say that my interactions with people (are overall very positive).
Humans are complex, social beings. The human experience includes disagreement and occasional interpersonal challenges. An organization that does not disagree likely has interpersonal challenges that are buried by social rules that make them undiscussable. Authentic relationships allow for disagreement and the opportunity to work through Model I traps when they creep in.

Human behavior is complicated. Sometimes it is "messy." Even in learning organizations, human behavior may be inconsistent and unpredictable. The socio-cognitive systems learning model illustrates dichotomous patterns of values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes. While an organization culture will have a dominant socio-cognitive pattern—Model II, in the case of learning organizations—the organization is a social system comprised of complex, unique human beings. Even in a Model II organization, Model I traps may occasionally creep in, negatively impacting interactions between individuals within the organization. Some people may use the Model I process more frequently than others do. In addition, any member of the organization is susceptible to Model I traps in response to potential threat or embarrassment (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010).

**Productive learning and change.** Model I values are focused on the desires and goals of the self (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Kitayama et al., 2007). Whether these self-oriented values are woven into the fabric of human nature or whether they are learned or some combination of the two—Model I traps may occasionally creep in. One potential way to distinguish learning organizations is that they have a plan for productively addressing these challenges. At NSC, in addition to discourse about what happened during the crisis and what can be learned from that experience, the team should also agree on how to address future Model I traps when they creep
in. The intent is to have a clear plan that is mutually agreed upon, to confront and address any Model I traps as they creep in, before they become hardened patterns of dysfunction.

The plan for productively addressing interpersonal challenges may vary in detail but, overall, centers on implementation of some combination of Model II behaviors in order to prompt and support people as they test their own assumptions. In learning organizations, an expectation is embedded within the organization culture to openly discuss differences as a means to understand one's true self and to understand other people. When Model I traps begin to emerge, a learning organization engages in Model II behaviors to test assumptions and get to the root of the problem and to resolve it productively.

Productive learning and change is achieved by agreeing on a plan for mutually supporting each other when setbacks occur. During a period when the learning organization experiences healthy Model II outcomes either before or between the emergence of Model I traps, the team members may co-create and commit to a process for addressing Model I traps when they do creep in. The goal is not to control people or to seek compliance but instead to help them get back on-course toward patterns that lead to wholeness (i.e., Model II), rather than those that lead to dysfunction (i.e., Model I). By co-creating a plan to help people get back on-track, the learning organization NSC will be prepared to identify Model I traps. Through open dialogue and other Model II behaviors, NSC will be poised to help people who are struggling with Model I traps by supporting those people and prompting them to test their own assumptions. If the Model I traps begin to develop into concrete patterns, the learning organization may pursue professional OD assistance, such as intervention or feedback loops through action research, in order to transition toward healing and restoration of the Model II culture. This is the essence of productive learning and change.
Conclusion about the Theory

Is NSC a Learning Organization that Uses the Model II Socio-Cognitive Process?

Is NSC an organization with the ability to see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (Argyris & Schön, 1996, p. xix)? Based on the analysis of data, the researcher has concluded that the National Service Coalition is a learning organization that uses the Model II socio-cognitive process. A variety of explanations for the lack of theory support for four of the empirical indicators were provided. One likely explanation was that NSC is a Model II organization where Model I traps crept in. NSC was undergoing a transformative learning process to renew its commitment to Model II.

Transformative learning process. The National Service Coalition was shaken by a crisis, marked by Model I traps creeping in. These traps created tension and resulted in Model I outcomes. Dissonance grew between the individuals practicing Model I in violation of the organization norms and the individuals practicing Model II behaviors consistent with organization norms. This dissonance grew and resulted in a crisis. In response to the crisis, individuals were faced with the choice to succumb to the traps, reverting to Model I as the new status quo, or pursuing the productive learning and change that occurs through the Model II socio-cognitive process.

NSC was at a pivotal point, a crossroads for shaping the organization culture, with outcomes that would impact not only the team but also the clients and family members the team serves. Elements of Model II values and behaviors have been initiated since NSC’s launch, but these values and behaviors were not consistent across the organization, as evidenced by the lack of theory support for: testing assumptions, engaging in open dialogue, providing freedom to
disagree, and productive learning and change. The Model II elements that were initiated were challenged by the emergence of Model I traps. During the case study, the researcher observed evidence of transformative learning and change, with most team members making the choice to reject the Model I traps that had been exhibited at NSC and instead to pursue the productive learning and change of Model II.

**Moderate Analytic Generalization**

Using Yin’s (2009) approach, this positivistic single-case study was designed to compare the research findings to the model in order to establish analytic generalization, building confidence in the model’s construct validity and its predictive capability for the organization. Specifically, analytic generalization was sought. NSC’s patterns of values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes gleaned from the findings were studied to determine if they mirrored the patterns illustrated in the socio-cognitive systems learning model.

Before the study began, a focus group was conducted at NSC to confirm its status as a learning organization, using the criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008). This focus group was a prerequisite to the study. In order for the study to identify the patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes that are needed for an organization to be a learning organization, NSC’s status as a learning organization was confirmed prior to beginning the study.

With a confirmed learning organization in place, the researcher was ready to proceed with the data collection. A chain of evidence was established through assimilation of the literature on culture and organization learning, and the positivistic single-case study was designed using Dubin’s (1969) theory building and research approach. The goal was to analyze the research findings to determine if NSC’s patterns of values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes matched the model.
This was the inaugural study of the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Most empirical indicators were supported. Four empirical indicators—testing assumptions, providing freedom to disagree, engaging in open dialogue, and productive learning and change—were not supported. No unit of analysis had all of its empirical indicators supported. However, for two of the three units, the majority of empirical indicators were supported. This could be explained by the transformative learning process that the organization was undergoing, renewing its commitment to a Model II organization culture. Overall, the theory achieved moderate analytic generalization.

**Limitations**

**Sole Focus on Model II Process**

This study was designed to test the patterns of values, behaviors, and outcomes of a learning organization, theorizing that the Model II socio-cognitive process is integrated into learning organizations. Model II is just one component of the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Therefore, this study was designed to test only one segment of the model, not the model in its entirety. Examination of the Model I socio-cognitive process may be recommended for future studies.

**Organization Infancy**

The National Service Coalition was a young organization, which was formally organized in 2012 by the activist founder, who for years had advocated for clients and their families and had provided information and educational services on a referral basis. Despite the long-term involvement of the founder in providing such services, the organization as a whole was in its infancy, founded just eight months ago. The staff members were new to the organization, and
working with the specific people who comprised the organization was a new experience for the entire staff. The newness of the organization may have been a limitation.

**Self-Reported Data**

Any study that uses self-reports risks validity limitations (Argyris, 2006b, 2010; Schein, 2004). In order to reduce that limitation and bolster validity, the following methods were triangulated: interviews, questionnaire, direct observation, and document review.

**Implications for Organization Development**

This study contributed both to the theory and the practice of organization development (OD).

**OD Theory**

**Contribution to the body of knowledge.** This study was originated in order to make Chris Argyris' theory more accessible. This research contributed to the body of knowledge about the culture of learning organizations by expanding on the element of culture as it relates to Argyris' theory. Also adding to the body of knowledge, this research assimilated the work of renowned scholar-practitioners including Parker Palmer, Albert Bandura, and Edgar Schein, in addition to Chris Argyris integrating their work and demonstrating the complementary nature of their theories. Building on Argyris' theory, this study repackaged Argyris' units of analysis to provide clarity to the concepts. Drawing from the literature, a comprehensive outline of empirical indicators was created to explain and test each unit. The empirical indicators were developed in conjunction with the development of the socio-cognitive systems learning model.

**Socio-cognitive systems learning model.** Another goal of the research was to analyze the literature to diagram a socio-cognitive systems learning model. The purpose was to create a visual representation of the theory, to further increase the theory's accessibility. This model was
designed to acknowledge the social, cognitive, and systems components of the learning process. The model depicts two dichotomous socio-cognitive approaches: Model I and Model II, as labeled by Argyris (2000, 2004, 2010). Model I is characterized by conscious and subconscious elements of the values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes that comprise this theory. Both Model I and Model II demonstrate the laws of interaction, showing the process of single-loop learning for Model I and the process of double-loop learning for Model II. The model also depicts the element of culture as it flows between the organization and the individual, as it influences each unit of analysis: the values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes. The empirical indicators were integrated into the model to provide detailed categories for each unit of analysis, lending to the model's accessibility.

**Transition between Models I and II.** This research also contributed to OD theory by explaining how the shift occurs between Models I and II, as observed during testing at the site organization. Organization-wide, the National Service Coalition did not alternate between Models I and II on a day-to-day basis. Such a complete, organization-wide shift would have required a drastic swing in underlying assumptions and values on a daily basis. Instead, the organization tended to create and operate by normative patterns, where any changes in underlying assumptions including norms and unwritten rules as well as values shifted gradually.

As noted by Dubin (1969), drastic shifts that represent a series of singular, unique occurrences such as day-to-day shifts between Model I and Model II cannot be tested because they lack predictability. In contrast, the building blocks of the socio-cognitive systems learning model are the units the values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes which
operate in tandem to create perpetual patterns. These patterns formed the basis of the prediction tested in this study.

Organization-wide, the socio-cognitive patterns did shift between Model I and Model II but only on a gradual basis. This gradual shift first occurred as Model I traps crept into the organization, and NSC shifted from a Model II organization practicing Model II socio-cognitive patterns to a Model II organization in the midst of a crisis, with Model I traps clashing with the Model II norms. Later, the gradual shift between socio-cognitive processes occurred as NSC experienced transformative learning, with most remaining team members recognizing and rejecting the destructive Model I traps and instead making the choice to pursue productive learning and change through Model II.

**Research design: Positivistic case study.** This study also contributed to the literature by providing an example of a positivistic case study with a research design that demonstrated a rigorous process for theory building and research. Dubin’s (1969) eight-step approach was used as the primary framework, and Yin’s (2009) approach was integrated. This process demonstrated a chain of logic to lend internal validity to the research design. Additionally, methods triangulation and triangulation of data sources were used to establish construct validity. As a result, measures and research protocol were developed for: (a) confirming learning organization status using the criteria identified by Garvin et al. (2008), (b) evaluating Model II patterns of values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes using both open-ended and Likert-scale interview questions, (c) assessing freedom to disagree by creating the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire, and (d) documenting direct observation. Data were also recorded from document review.
OD Practice

Diagnostic tools. The accessibility of the socio-cognitive systems learning model made the model relevant not only to theory but also in practice. This study contributed to OD practice by creating diagnostic tools for: (a) learning organization status and (b) the Model II socio-cognitive systems learning process.

Role of practice in explaining the findings. This study demonstrated that the practitioner component of the scholar-practitioner model is essential. The findings showed how the complexity of human behavior and the role of the transformative learning process in influencing people to choose Model II values, behavior, and outcomes. While the theory neatly separates Models I and II, the findings demonstrated that even in a learning organization, Model I behaviors may occasionally creep in from the dominant societal culture.

How to become a learning organization. The concept of a learning organization is largely misunderstood. Identifying how to become a learning organization is even more foreign, as it is often erroneously viewed as a prescriptive list of best practices (Argyris, 2010). This study used Argyris and Schön’s (1996) definition of a learning organization as an organization with the ability to see things in new ways, gain new understandings, and produce new patterns of behavior all on a continuing basis and in a way that engages the organization as a whole (p. xix). Organization learning is a dynamic process, not a prescriptive checklist of best practices (Argyris, 2010). Using this definition, this study described how to become a learning organization: by developing a culture that is centered upon the Model II socio-cognitive systems learning process and co-creating a plan for addressing Model I traps that creep into the organization (Argyris, 2010).
**OD assistance recommended.** Finally, this study contributed to the practice of organization development by demonstrating how the diagnostic tool identified gaps in the organization’s Model II socio-cognitive process.

By recognizing when a change is occurring or when a change needs to occur, the OD scholar-practitioner may identify the stresses that occur both internally and interpersonally. In the case of NSC, the site organization, stresses were evident in the following areas: testing assumptions, providing freedom to disagree, engaging in open dialogue, and productive learning and change. In the case of NSC, these stresses needed attention. OD assistance from a scholar-practitioner was recommended to target these stress areas.

Such OD assistance may take the form of OD intervention (Bartunek et al., 2008; Edmondson, 1996) or the use of a feedback loop through action research (Burke, 2008), in order to help organizations learn to test their assumptions. The researcher suspected that without OD assistance, the organization had a greater chance of remaining entrenched in blindness and failing to test assumptions. This, in turn, would inhibit transformative learning, the transition from Model I to Model II (Argyris, 2010; Mezirow, 2000, 2003).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

**Research Replication: Model II**

Because this was the first time the model and measures were used, further research is needed to demonstrate theory support and to further establish validity for the measures. The goal will be to establish analytic generalization of the socio-cognitive systems learning model by demonstrating Model II theory support for each unit of analysis. In the short term, a small learning organization, similar to the site for this study, is recommended to replicate this single-case study. Long term, the study may be replicated with medium- and large-sized organizations.
Research Adaptation: Model I

This research studied only the Model II process of the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Future research is needed to study the Model I socio-cognitive process through a case study of an organization that does not meet the learning organization criteria. A similar research design would be used, with similar methods, but the measures would be adapted to reflect the Model I empirical indicators.

Pretest-Posttest Research Design

Site: Learning organization. This study recommended OD intervention or implementation of a feedback loop to facilitate transformative learning, with team members making the choice to reject traps and pursue the path toward productive learning and change. Future research is recommended to measure the impact of intervention or implementation of a feedback loop by conducting a pretest-posttest research design with an organization pursuing transformative learning.

Applying the work of Argyris (2000, 2004, 2010), the purpose would be twofold: (a) to measure the extent of the transition from the pretest to the posttest and (b) to measure the simultaneous presence and absence of Model I and Model II empirical indicators within the same case. The pretest may consist of both Model I measures and Model II measures (i.e., the Model II measures used in this study). Similarly, the posttest may consist of both the Model I and Model II measures. This would allow comparison of the following findings for an identified learning organization: the Model I and Model II pretests, the Model I and Model II posttests, the Model I pretest and posttest, and the Model II pretest and posttest.

Site: Non-learning organization. Another future study is recommended to measure the impact of OD intervention or implementation of a feedback loop on an organization which does
not meet the learning organization criteria and, upon initial analysis, appears to use the Model I socio-cognitive process. Using the same approach as the future research recommended above, this study would allow comparison of the following findings for an organization that did not meet the organization learning criteria: the Model I and Model II pretests, the Model I and Model II posttests, the Model I pretest and posttest, and the Model II pretest and posttest. The extent of the transition from pretest to posttest would be measured. Additionally, the Model I and Model II empirical indicators would be measured to analyze the organization culture according to the socio-cognitive systems learning model.

**Longitudinal Research**

NSC is currently an organization in transition. A longitudinal study is recommended to periodically test NSC’s Model II values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes in order to map how they change over time and how they vary according the stage of transition currently experienced. This would be the first study to analyze the culture of a learning organization from a systems perspective on a longitudinal basis, beginning with the organization’s infancy. This research would lend insight into the socio-cognitive systems learning theory and, specifically, how the NSC addresses Model I traps through transformative learning.

**Critical Theory Application**

This study touched on the role of socio-cognitive systems learning in critical theory research. Future research is recommended to analyze the power of the Model I socio-cognitive process as a system of hegemony. Hegemonies are tightly ingrained into societal norms. They are behavioral patterns with "rules" designed for the dominant to ensure they will come out on top, through manipulation of those they oppress (Brookfield, 2000, 2005; Ford, 1999) through skilled unawareness (Argyris, 2000; Brookfield, 2005).
Model's Application to Other Social Systems

This study applied the socio-cognitive systems learning model to the culture of learning organizations. Future research is recommended to apply the model to other social systems, such as families or humans who interact as they share a common, lived experience.

Conclusion

We are born with a seed of selfhood that contains the spiritual DNA of our uniqueness—an encoded birthright knowledge of who we are, why we are here, and how we are related to others (Palmer, 2004, p. 32). A Model I culture, rife with cutthroat competition and human struggle, is bent on controlling people by clouding their birthright selfhood (Palmer, 2004; Walsh, 2010). Knowingly or unknowingly, people march in-step with the culture, armed to fight each other in misguided efforts to discover who they are and the individualistic purpose of their lives (Bandura, 2002; Bellah et al., 2008; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kitayama et al., 2007; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998; Waggoner, 2011).

Underlying this misguided effort is a deeply held belief that in order to identify and reclaim oneself, one must achieve unilateral control and win, and others must lose (Argyris, 2000, 2004; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2011; Palmer, 2004, 2011; Walsh, 2010).

In a Model I organization, the underlying assumption is that managers should control employees (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006) and motivate them through a social game (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) of engagement, which is driven by elements of influence, persuasion (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008), or empowerment (Argyris, 1998; Ford, 1999). The underlying assumption implies that commitment is external, and without management Model I-driven unilateral control, employees will not be committed (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris &
Schön, 1996; Conbere & Heorhiadi, 2006). However, several authors (Argyris, 1998, 2010; Billett, 2001; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Kimball, 2011; Palmer, 2004, 2011) attribute real commitment to the Model II socio-cognitive process, co-creating organization purpose and working together to fulfill that purpose. This generative process results from each person’s collaborative contribution. With the Model I process, employee commitment may be espoused, but the Model I strategy for obtaining the commitment—through unilateral control—can only result in compliance, not internal commitment. Internal commitment is an outcome that is exclusive to the Model II socio-cognitive process.

Employee engagement and organization learning may espouse the same outcomes (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2010). However, with employee engagement (Gravenkemper, 2007; Haudan, 2008), the nature of the conversations, as well as the outcomes, are predetermined. Managers’ attempt to engage employees using predetermined outcomes are futile because people avoid engagement when they anticipate that their contribution will not be valued (Ford, 1999).

With organization learning, employees participate in deciding the nature of the dialogue, the direction it takes, and its outcome. The only aspect that is decided in advance is the organization development process or liberating structure to generate dialogue, as described by Kimball (2011), and the ground rules that are mutually decided and agreed upon. No other aspect of the conversation is predetermined (Ford, 1999). Employees have an important role in making decisions based on the conversation and in co-creating the future (Kimball, 2011). While Model I employee engagement initiatives produce only superficial learning, Model II organization learning produces an internal commitment to productive learning and change (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Billett, 2001; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2004, 2011).
Transformative learning describes the transition from the Model I to the Model II socio-cognitive process (Argyris, 2010; Mezirow, 2000, 2003). Argyris (2010) asserted, "Changing will not be easy but I suggest that we have no other choice. We have seen the corrosive impact of traps in organizations." (p. 200). Testing assumptions through open dialogue is essential for people to transition from Model I to Model II. OD intervention or a feedback loop may be used to facilitate the testing of assumptions, creating opportunities for open dialogue. This dialogue should also address how to address traps when they creep in.

Marshak and Grant (2011) explained, "The importance of conversations to frame (the individual's) experience versus simply convey objective information needs to be more carefully understood and cultivated by those advancing change agendas." (p. 6). If organizations do attempt to resolve problematic interpersonal patterns, they tend to approach those problems with default, instrumental learning strategies which are appropriate for solving only object- or task-related problems rather than communicative learning (Argyris, 2006b; Bullard, 2011; Gudynas, 2011; Mezirow, 2000, 2003). To change these patterns, organizations must first recognize and understand their default patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting (Edmondson, 1996; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kimball, 2011; Mezirow, 2003) before they can establish new patterns (Argyris, 2000, 2004, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Edmondson, 1996; Mezirow, 2003).

Organization learning requires a conversation shift, abandoning the default Model I patterns (Edmondson, 1996) and co-creating nascent Model II patterns of language and conversation (Block, 2008; Ford, 1999; Kimball, 2011; Marshak & Grant, 2011). If change efforts are only superficial (Billett, 2001), the organization will regress to its default Model I patterns (Edmondson, 1996; Kimball, 2011). True organization learning requires deep, cultural change. This change in organization culture is a result of team members co-creating new
conversation patterns that use the Model II socio-cognitive process to acknowledge and test underlying assumptions. Testing these underlying assumptions through dialogue invites a culture of organization learning (Argyris, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Marshak & Grant, 2011; Mezirow, 2003; Palmer, 2011), as depicted in the Model II process of the socio-cognitive systems learning model. Applying this model, the process of transformative learning uses the Model II socio-cognitive process to root-out Model I traps that creep into the organization from the dominant societal culture, restoring the Model II culture of the learning organization.
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Appendix A:  
Focus Group Protocol to Test Learning Organization Criteria

Participant Names:

Interviewer Name:

Date of Focus Group:

Time Focus Group Started:

Time Focus Group Concluded:

Location of Focus Group:

Instructions:
Gather a group of three to five staff members to form the focus group. Ask the questions to the group.

Note that special instructions are noted in italics and should not be read aloud. The focus group will not be audio-recorded. The interviewer should record, in writing, both verbal and non-verbal communication as it is observed during the focus group.

Introduction:
Thank you for meeting with me today and participating in this focus group. My research involves how people interact within organizations and how organizations learn. During this focus group, I will ask you questions as a group about the learning environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus group questions</th>
<th>Interviewer notes about participant responses</th>
<th>Interviewer observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do people learn on the job at NSC?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus group questions</td>
<td>Interviewer notes about participant responses</td>
<td>Interviewer observations</td>
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</table>
| 2. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? NSC provides a supportive learning environment. Ô | *Indicate the response for each focus group member who shares:*  
1) Strongly disagree  
2) Disagree  
3) Neither agree nor disagree  
4) Agree  
5) Strongly agree |                                                                        |
| 2. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? At NSC, we have the opportunity to learn as we work by experimenting and sharing ideas with each other. Ô | *Indicate the response for each focus group member who shares:*  
1) Strongly disagree  
2) Disagree  
3) Neither agree nor disagree  
4) Agree  
5) Strongly agree |                                                                        |
| 3. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? The leaders at NSC seek to learn by welcoming input and listening. Ô | *Indicate the response for each focus group member who shares:*  
1) Strongly disagree  
2) Disagree  
3) Neither agree nor disagree  
4) Agree  
5) Strongly agree |                                                                        |
Appendix B:
Interview Protocol

Participant Name:

Interviewer Name:

Date of Interview:

Time Interview Started:

Time Interview Concluded:

Location of Interview:

Instructions:
Confirming the site’s status as a learning organization is a prerequisite for the case study. Proceed with the study, including the interview component, only after confirming the learning organization criteria through the focus group (see Appendix A). If the site did not meet the learning organization criteria, the study of this site will be terminated. If the site did meet the learning organization criteria, proceed with the study.

Ask the numbered interview questions. Use the lettered questions at your discretion as probes to elicit data-rich, narrative responses. The interviewer should ask additional follow-up questions, beyond this protocol, in order to either: (1) clarify the participant’s response or (2) probe further if the Likert-scale response is inconsistent with the qualitative data provided in the open-ended responses.

Note that special instructions are noted in italics and should not be read aloud. The interviews are audio-recorded, in order for the interviewer to later analyze the verbatim interview responses. Throughout the course of the interview, the interviewer should record, in writing, non-verbal communication as it is observed or immediately following the interview.

Introduction:
Thank you for meeting with me today and participating in this research study. My research involves how people interact within organizations and how organizations learn. I will ask you questions about what it’s like to work here, in order to get a sense of the organization’s social norms and the ways people interact.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Interviewer notes about participant responses</th>
<th>Interviewer observations</th>
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</table>
| 1. What's it like to work here?  
   a. How do people get along here?  
   b. What's the social atmosphere like?  
   c. What are the unwritten rules here about the way people should interact?  
   d. How do people work together?  
   e. At NSC, how do people learn? |  |
| 2. What happens when people disagree?  
   a. When people disagree, how do they communicate?  
   b. When people disagree, what's the work atmosphere like?  
   c. How are touchy subjects handled?  
   d. When people disagree, how does this affect your work experience? |  |
| 3. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? People here tend to test their assumptions by talking to each other, rather than jumping to conclusions. | Circle response:  
   1) Strongly disagree  
   2) Disagree  
   3) Neither agree nor disagree  
   4) Agree  
   5) Strongly agree |  |
| 4a. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? I feel like I fit in at NSC. | Circle response:  
   1) Strongly disagree  
   2) Disagree  
   3) Neither agree nor disagree  
   4) Agree  
   5) Strongly agree |  |
| 4b. What does the idea of fitting in mean for you? |  |
| 5a. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? At NSC, I am encouraged to share my ideas and talents. | Circle response:  
   1) Strongly disagree  
   2) Disagree  
   3) Neither agree nor disagree  
   4) Agree  
   5) Strongly agree |  |
<p>| 5b. What does sharing your ideas and talents mean for you? |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Interviewer notes about participant responses</th>
<th>Interviewer observations</th>
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<tr>
<td>6a. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement?</td>
<td>Circle response:</td>
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<td>When people at NSC have a difference of opinion, they have an open and honest</td>
<td>1) Strongly disagree</td>
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<td>conversation about it.</td>
<td>2) Disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>4) Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Strongly agree</td>
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<td>6b. What does the idea of an open and honest conversation mean for you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Circle response:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1) Strongly disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Strongly agree</td>
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<td>7a. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement?</td>
<td>Circle response:</td>
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<td>At NSC, people seek to understand each other's perspectives by asking questions.</td>
<td>1) Strongly disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4) Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Strongly agree</td>
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<td>7b. What does the idea of understanding other people by asking questions mean for</td>
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<td>you?</td>
<td>Circle response:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1) Strongly disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4) Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Strongly agree</td>
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<td>8a. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement?</td>
<td>Circle response:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>At NSC, people seek to understand each other's perspectives by listening.</td>
<td>1) Strongly disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4) Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Strongly agree</td>
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<td>8b. What does the idea of understanding other people by listening mean for you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Circle response:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1) Strongly disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4) Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>9a. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement?</td>
<td>Circle response:</td>
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<td>At NSC, people treat each other with respect.</td>
<td>1) Strongly disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4) Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Strongly agree</td>
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<td>9b. What does the idea of respect mean for you?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interview questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interviewer notes about participant responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interviewer observations</strong></td>
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<td><strong>10a.</strong> On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? When conflicts occur at NSC, people tend to resolve the problem.</td>
<td><strong>Circle response:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1) Strongly disagree&lt;br&gt;2) Disagree&lt;br&gt;3) Neither agree nor disagree&lt;br&gt;4) Agree&lt;br&gt;5) Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10b.</strong> When conflicts occur, what does the idea of resolving the problem mean for you?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11a.</strong> On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? When people disagree at NSC, it prompts discussion that results in productive learning and change.</td>
<td><strong>Circle response:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1) Strongly disagree&lt;br&gt;2) Disagree&lt;br&gt;3) Neither agree nor disagree&lt;br&gt;4) Agree&lt;br&gt;5) Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11b.</strong> When people disagree, what does the idea of productive learning and change mean for you?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12a.</strong> On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? I feel a sense of peace about my relationships with NSC colleagues because we work in harmony.</td>
<td><strong>Circle response:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1) Strongly disagree&lt;br&gt;2) Disagree&lt;br&gt;3) Neither agree nor disagree&lt;br&gt;4) Agree&lt;br&gt;5) Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12b.</strong> What does having a sense of peace about your work relationships mean for you?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13a.</strong> On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? I trust my colleagues at NSC.</td>
<td><strong>Circle response:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1) Strongly disagree&lt;br&gt;2) Disagree&lt;br&gt;3) Neither agree nor disagree&lt;br&gt;4) Agree&lt;br&gt;5) Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13b.</strong> What does the idea of trust mean for you?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14.</strong> Those are my interview questions. Do you have anything else to share with me about NSC culture or the way people interact here?</td>
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Appendix C:  
Protocol for the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire

Instructions:
For this component of the data collection, the following materials will be needed:

- One copy of the questionnaire for each participant
- One sealable #10 envelope for each participant
- A sealed box with a slit for inserting envelopes, so the envelopes may not be retrieved until the researcher breaks the seal on the box following the entire data collection process

At the closing of the interview, provide the individual with the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire and verbally share the introduction below.

Introduction:
Thank you for sharing this information in the interview. Now I'm going to provide you with a questionnaire to complete.

(Next, verbally explain the following items, as written on the top of the questionnaire: purpose, confidentiality, and instructions, including the instructions for rating oneself.)

(After sharing the instructions with the participant, leave the room to allow the individual to complete the questionnaire privately.)
Appendix D:
Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire

This is a confidential questionnaire that asks: If you disagreed with a NSC colleague, how comfortable would you be: (a) to tell him/her that you disagreed and (b) to openly discuss your thoughts and ideas with him/her? You will be asked to rate your comfort level with each NSC colleague. Please answer honestly. This will provide a true understanding of the organization culture and, specifically, the interactions within the organization.

Confidentiality: The researcher will leave the room, so you may complete the questionnaire privately. Your responses are completely confidential. You will not write your name on the questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, please place it in the envelope provided, seal the envelope, and put it in the box provided. The researcher will not know which person completed each questionnaire. No names will be used in the "freedom to disagree" component of the research.

Question: If you disagreed with this NSC colleague, how comfortable would you be: (a) to tell her that you disagreed and (b) to openly discuss your thoughts and ideas with her?

Instructions: Please rate each NSC staff member according to the question above. Beside the name of each staff member, write a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, based on the response scale below. If you’ve never had the opportunity to work with this person, write N/A.

Rating Yourself: When you get to your name, please answer how comfortable you think your NSC colleagues are: (a) to tell you that they disagree with you and (b) to openly discuss their thoughts and ideas with you.

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<td><strong>Response Scale</strong></td>
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<td>1 = Very uncomfortable</td>
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<td>3 = Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable</td>
<td>4 = Somewhat comfortable</td>
<td>5 = Very comfortable</td>
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<td>N/A = I have not had the opportunity to work with him/her</td>
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Good morning!

Thank you for allowing me to visit your weekly meeting and share some information with you about my research project. This research is part of my doctoral program in Organization Development from the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. I am especially excited to be applying this research to NSC, and I would like to invite each of you to participate in the study.

My research is on the culture of learning organizations and, specifically, how the people who work within a learning organization interact with each other. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are in no way required to participate as part of your job. You may also stop at any time. You will receive no money or other direct benefits from participating. However, your participation would contribute to the greater good by helping to build understanding for what is needed for an organization to be a healthy, learning organization.

As we begin:
- I would like to meet with just a handful of the participants to do a focus group to get your input on how NSC approaches learning.

For all participants, your voluntary participation would include:
- A one-on-one interview with me that is estimated to take about an hour. The purpose of the interview is to learn more about what it's like to work here. My interview questions are designed to get a sense of the culture here at NSC, and I'm hoping to hear stories about your experiences working here.
- I will also provide you with a brief questionnaire that asks about what happens when people disagree or have a difference of opinion. It is a one-page questionnaire that is estimated to take three to seven minutes to complete.
- I will plan my visit for a Thursday to observe a staff meeting and other interpersonal exchanges between people who have opted to voluntarily participate.

Please know that I am committed to confidentiality. The things you share will be confidential. No actual names will be used in my research. With the stories you share during the interview, pseudonyms will be used. For the other information you share, my research will talk about the responses and the percentages of certain types of responses. None of your names will appear in my research. Your responses will remain strictly confidential, and I will not share any of your responses with anyone.

I would like to have an idea of who would like to participate, so I can set up interviews. I have Informed Consent Forms with me. Please read the form and sign it if you would like to participate. I will be here following the meeting, if you'd like to return the consent form to me.

Do you have any questions? Thank you for allowing me to share this information about my research project with you today!
Appendix F:
Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

The Culture of Learning Organizations: Understanding Argyris’ Theory through a Socio-Cognitive Systems Learning Model

I am conducting a study about the culture of learning organizations. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an employee or volunteer of the National Service Coalition, the focus organization for this case study. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Laura Friesenborg, doctoral candidate in the Organization Development Doctorate program at the University of St. Thomas, with Dr. John Conbere serving as advisor.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is: to understand and explain the values, learned social behaviors, and outcomes of a learning organization. This is achieved by studying staff members’ values, the ways they interact with each other, and the outcomes of their social interaction patterns. Ultimately, this research seeks to understand organization culture, specifically as it applies to learning organizations. This case study will focus on a small organization.

Procedures:
Because this research focuses on learning organizations, the first step is to confirm that the organization is a learning organization. If you agree to be in this study, I may ask you to participate in a small focus group that is designed to test the organization’s status as a learning organization. To do this, three to five staff members will be asked to participate in the focus group. The researcher will ask the group a series of four questions. The questions are based on criteria that define a learning organization. The focus group is estimated to take 30 to 60 minutes. If the focus group responses confirm the organization’s status as a learning organization, using the defined criteria, the study will proceed. If the focus group responses do not reflect the learning organization criteria, the study will be discontinued.

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things: participate in a confidential, audio-recorded, individual interview that is estimated to take 30 to 75 minutes; complete an anonymous, one-page Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire, which is estimated to take three to seven minutes to complete; and allow the researcher to confidentially
note any interpersonal interactions or nonverbal behaviors observed through the interview, informal interactions with other staff members, or at staff meetings during the researcher’s visit to the organization.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**
The study has a risk. The researcher may ask questions related to sensitive information in the interview and questionnaire. Please know, however, that specific steps are taken to maintain confidentiality and, in the case of the questionnaire, anonymity.

The researcher is committed to confidentiality. Interviews will be conducted privately in a room with only the principal investigator and the participant present. The audio recording of the interview will be maintained for six months in a password-protected file, then will be erased.

Protocol is provided for administering the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaire. The principal investigator will leave the room following the interview, so the participant may complete the questionnaire privately. Upon completion, the participant will insert the questionnaire in an individual envelope, seal the envelope, then insert it through the slit of a sealed box. Per the protocol, participants are not to write their names on the questionnaire. The protocol is designed to maintain participant anonymity. The original, hard copies of the questionnaire will be maintained in a locked file cabinet located in the principal investigator’s home office, available for access only by the principal investigator. After six months, the questionnaires will be destroyed using a shredder.

There are no direct benefits for participating, and no compensation will be provided for participating. There are only indirect benefits, as described in the Background Information (above).

**Confidentiality:**
The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you in any way. The following documents will exist only in hard copy form and will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in the home office of the principal investigator, with access available only to the principal investigator and no one else: signed consent forms, a listing that corresponds the actual initials of the staff members with the pseudonyms used in narratives in the research report, written notes from direct observations and document review, and the anonymous Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaires.

The consent forms will be maintained for three years and, on 4/01/16, will be destroyed using a shredder. The following documents, existing only in hard copy, will be maintained for six months and, on 10/01/13, will be destroyed using a shredder: the listing that corresponds the actual initials of the staff members with the pseudonyms using in the narratives of the research report, written notes from direct observations and document review, and the Freedom to Disagree and Discuss Questionnaires.
The audio-recorded interviews will be maintained for six months in a password-protected file on
the principal investigator's tablet computer and, on 10/01/13, will be permanently erased from
the computer.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate
will not affect your current or future relations with the University of St. Thomas. If you decide
to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time up to and until the completion of the
questionnaire. Should you decide to withdraw, the data collected up to that point will be used in
the study]. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask.

Contacts and Questions
My name is Laura Friesenborg. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have
questions later, you may contact me at 641-585-8254. You may also call the advisor for my
doctoral dissertation, Dr. John Conbere, at 651-962-4456. You may also contact the University
of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I
consent to participate in the study, and I consent to have the interview audio-recorded. I am at
least 18 years of age.

________________________________________
Signature of Study Participant

________________________________________
Printed Name of Study Participant

________________________________________
Signature of Researcher