Individual, Team, and Organizational Learning Within a U.S. Army Civil Affairs Community

Submitted by

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Abstract

The DLOQ-M (Military), an open-ended modified questionnaire version of the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), was used to understand the perception of organizational learning, individual learning, and leadership within a U.S. Army military Civil Affairs community. A non-experimental qualitative phenomenological methodology was used to understand how seven dimensions of the learning organization contributed to organizational learning within the community. Twenty-one volunteers from a military civil affairs community in the Southwestern United States participated in individual interviews. Research questions addressed how individual, team, and organizational learning occurred. Results of the study show that organizational culture and leadership contributed to developing a learning organization. The After Action Review (AAR) was the recurring organizational learning vehicle described by interview participants. Results also highlighted a reliance on IT systems to store, maintain, and disseminate organizational information to unit personnel.

Keywords: learning organizations, military, individual learning, team learning, after action review, leadership, finance, performance outcomes, Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family who has stood by me during all these years of academic work and research. I could not have accomplished this effort without their support. I would also like to dedicate this to all past, current and future military service members who continue furthering their educational goals while serving their country. It is possible to work long days and complete your academic goals through proper planning and dedication.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank God for every day given on this planet as I attempt to make the best of every day and situation. I would like to thank my family for their patience over the years while spending many late nights, weekends, and holidays with a computer on my lap while attempting to spend time with you. I would like to thank my committee members for always keeping me focused and guiding me through this journey. I would like to thank Coleen Crouch for coaching me how to use NVIVO properly when I tried to manipulate data for thematic analysis correctly. I would like to thank the Civil Affairs community and leadership (Colonel Mauser, Colonel Bartos, and Lieutenant Colonel Nunziato) for allowing me to conduct a qualitative phenomenological study in an organization consistently experiencing a high operational tempo. Finally, I would like to thank my mother for teaching me never to give up, take a break just long enough to catch my breath, then getting back at meeting my challenges.
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Military organizations by nature are continuously learning and adapting to their environment based on what the United States Army calls After Action Reviews (AARs), which provide soldiers and units with feedback concerning missions and task performances (Department of the Army, 1993). However, there are limited recent academic articles or case studies concerning learning organizations and government agencies. There is even less academic discussion concerning learning organizations and militaries. Although professional military journals such as Armed Forces Comptroller, Sustainment Magazine, Fires Magazine, and other branch-specific publications seek to influence the Army’s profession of arms, they provide limited academic discussion concerning militaries as learning organizations. These publications and institutional doctrine help shape how the Army operates as a professional force. Within the force, subordinate units resemble civilian corporate structure with corporate-like divisions and departments. These units also face learning challenges similar to private companies, including dissemination of knowledge and information.

To address the academic knowledge gaps between the field of organizational learning and studies associated with military organizations, the researcher conducted a qualitative phenomenological study comprised of 21 individuals from a military Civil Affairs community. The researcher bridged these knowledge gaps by incorporating concepts of organizational learning (Senge, 1990) with concepts traditionally provided by military historians to see if a military Civil Affairs community represented a learning organization (Foley, 2014). This study differed from previous research efforts in that the researcher used a qualitative study to examine a military Civil Affairs community. Previous scholars addressed organizational learning within deployed military
organizations. In contrast, the researcher expanded academic knowledge concerning organizational learning and military organizations in a garrison environment (i.e., home station). The researcher provided knowledge regarding how military organizations learned utilizing an open-ended version of Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) (Watkins & Marsick, 1993), and knowledge regarding how the community adapted utilizing the performance outcomes associated with knowledge performance, financial performance, and mission performance.

**Background of the Study**

In 2011, the U.S. Army had a need for developing a solution for the active duty forces’ requirement for providing a Civil Affairs presence to support various theater commands. The Civil Affairs community historically resided in the Army Reserve and National Guard units that are limited by federal law to how many times these units can be called to active duty to meet mission requirements. Since September 11, 2001 (9/11), the Army has faced a two-front war, while still meeting various demands throughout the world. The creation of the 85th Civil Affairs Brigade was a response to Civil Affairs requirements within the active duty force. The need for a rapid expansion resulted in the directed growth of a small military branch into a larger active duty force that increased personnel recruiting to meet required manning targets (Nunziato, 2015). This expansion shaped the professional development of the Civil Affairs personnel as the branch increased in staffing. The brigade activated in 2011 to help meet Army requirements and represented an excellent opportunity to study how the brigade learned to adapt to environmental pressures as it matured since inception.

The Army created the active duty Civil Affairs positions from select personnel to establish this new community, bringing in different perspectives and experiences from
various branches within the force. For example, the Civil Affairs community recruited personnel found within the Special Forces community to gain institutional knowledge within the newly formed branch. However, the urgency associated with creating the active duty Civil Affairs community caused planners to mirror the Army Reserve and Army National Guard component organizational frameworks (Nunziato, 2015). The result was the rapid creation of an active duty force based on a reserve model that required adaptation to active component operational needs. While the creation of the unit provided various opportunities for further research within an organizational structure setting (e.g., unit cohesion, organizational management, team building, and human resource management), the researcher only focused on the brigades’ ability to learn and adapt as the organization matured. This maturing process presented the researcher with an opportunity to examine how a Civil Affairs community adapted to the changing environment and better understand how individuals learned within a rapidly expanding military branch. According to Foley (2014), there is a literature gap between the academic understanding of organizational learning and military historians’ descriptions of innovation and adaptation as represented by the Civil Affairs community.

A case study regarding the British and German armies during WWI described a gap in the literature concerning the civilian understanding of learning organizations and the military historian description of military organizational learning (Foley, 2014). Specifically, Foley (2014) stated there was a lack of information about organizational culture and how military organizations adapt based on two types of organizational learning models: generative and adaptive (Senge, 1990). This researcher used the study of a military Civil Affairs community to increase understanding and decrease the currently present literature gaps. To describe organizational learning in the sample population, the
researcher used a description of the two types of organizational learning, generative and adaptive (Senge, 1990), which correspond to the military historian’s concepts of innovation and adaptation (Foley, 2014). Research by Foley (2014) represented the most recent case study related to a subject matter area that has few such case studies over the last 20 years.

Previous academic research efforts by scholars included an understanding of organizational learning through an examination of public sector organizations. Ahmadi, Daryani, and Hosseyn (2014) examined the municipality of Noor City in Iran and employee learning, which demonstrated that organizational learning correlated to individual learning and knowledge management. Bhaskar and Mishra (2014) explored links between work engagement and organizational learning in a multi-national IT firm in Delhi. Two out of the seven DLOQ dimensions, connecting the organization to the environment and empowering employees, were significant predictors of work engagement (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2014). Schiena, Letens, Van Aken, and Farris (2013) examined organizational learning and leadership roles within deployed military units. The authors demonstrated that transactional leadership correlated to contingent rewards and organizational learning related to transformational leadership. Tremaine and Seligman (2013) addressed organizational learning with the Army Acquisition Corps and indicated that individual learning facilitated organizational goals. In these studies, the authors contributed to organizational learning theory within their respective research areas. The current researcher sought to further organizational learning and military organization understanding by exploring a military Civil Affairs community in a garrison environment.
Problem Statement

The problem is a lack of knowledge concerning how organizational learning, individual learning, and leadership influence the perception of members in a military Civil Affairs community (Foley, 2014). The significance of this study is that the author increased knowledge of organizational learning within the Army’s Civil Affairs community. The results of this research added to the body of knowledge regarding individual and organizational learning within a military Civil Affairs community. The researcher further contributed to the organizational learning theories of Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996) and Senge (1990) through a better understanding of how interview participants learned in military organizations. Furthermore, the research results provided beneficial information to both the academic community and the Civil Affairs community concerning how leadership played a role in organizational learning.

Few researchers address public agencies such as government and military entities as learning organizations. Military organizations are non-profit organizations that face performance pressures with constrained annual budgets. These organizations require learning from individual experiences within the agency to adapt to evolving environmental conditions (Schiena et al., 2013). Several factors, including limited access to military entities, limit academic studies concerning military units as learning organizations. However, there is plenty of organizational learning academic literature about private industry entities. Kleiner, Nickelsburg, and Pilaski (2012) examined the effects of strikes on organizational learning. Chang and Harrington (2013) studied organizational learning and new product introduction within firms. Kobayashi (2014) explored learning between Toyota and its suppliers. Yet there is a lack of academic research describing how military organizations become learning organizations. The Civil
Affairs community provided the researcher an opportunity to study a military organization and organizational learning to contribute to the academic discussion.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this non-experimental qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perception of organizational and individual learning within a military Civil Affairs community. The researcher sought to provide additional knowledge concerning a literature gap identified by Foley (2014), who stated there was a lack of information about organizational culture and how military organizations adapt based on two types of organizational learning models (i.e., generative and adaptive; Senge, 1990).

By conducting a case study within the Civil Affairs community in the Southwestern United States, the researcher examined a population reflective of the larger Army community in a garrison environment. The researcher contributed to the field of organizational learning by increasing literature addressing both military and public sector organizations. Since government agencies are non-profit organizations, the way in which these kinds of organizations assimilate individual knowledge into the collective whole affects unit effectiveness (Tremaine & Seligman, 2013). By understanding the organizational dynamics that contribute to organizational learning, including the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), the researcher contributed to understanding how individual learning lead to improved military unit operations (Vandergriff, 2006). By creating an open-ended version of the DLOQ (Watkins & Marsick, 1993), the researcher better understood how the Civil Affairs community adapted utilizing the performance outcomes associated with knowledge performance, financial performance, and mission performance.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions guide this qualitative study:

RQ1: How does individual learning influence the perception of team and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs community?

RQ2: How does team learning influence the perception of individual and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs community?

RQ3: How does organizational learning influence the perception of individual and team learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs community?

Understanding how military organizations learn and improve operations was important in understanding how army units improved in the absence of traditional market pressures to produce profits found in private industry. For non-profit organizations, profits manifest themselves in the form of improved efficiencies and customer service. For military organizations, these efficiencies and customer service improvements translate into the diffusion of knowledge across military organizations (Starke, 2013). Dissemination of organizational learning contributes to the crawl, walk, run mentality (Offstein & Dufresne, 2007). To understand how the Civil Affairs community learns within the larger context of the Army, the researcher modified an open-ended version of the DLOQ to align with the military structure. The researcher renamed the revised questionnaire the DLOQ-Military (DLOQ-M).
Advancing Theoretical Knowledge

The researcher advanced scientific knowledge concerning learning organizations within military organizations through the examination of a Civil Affairs community. The scholar’s analysis of a Civil Affairs community increased the scientific knowledge of organizational learning within the Civil Affairs branch of the U.S. Army. Foley (2014) stated there was a literature gap discussing and dealing with organizational culture and the way military organizations adapt. The researcher bridged the literary gap identified by Foley (2014) by conducting a qualitative phenomenological study to explore the link between organizational learning and individual learning within a military Civil Affairs community. The researcher learned that the examined organization was an evolving learning organization.

The researcher focused on organizational learning theory as described by Senge (1990) and Watkins and Marsick (1993) to determine if a military Civil Affairs community was a learning organization within the U.S. Army. The researcher concluded the Civil Affairs community was a learning organization. The researcher looked at how individuals learned within the sample population and how the unit leadership adapted to changing conditions based on lessons learned. The Army captures lessons learned through an AAR, which assists in the learning and adaptation process found within the U.S. Army (Darling & Parry, 2001). The researcher also looked at how leadership played a role in facilitating the organization’s learning environment to facilitate the Civil Affairs community in adapting to changing conditions. In reviewing leadership contributions to organizational learning, the researcher explored which leadership theory (transactional or transformational) best describes learning within the Civil Affairs community. While the interview guide (DLOQ and DLOQ-M) does not measure leadership theory, interviewee
responses supported transformational leadership theory as a learning mechanism.

Transformational leadership theory states that leaders inspire positive change, which supports the concept of the Civil Affairs community as a learning organization. Schiena et al. (2013) completed similar work in studying learning organizations and leadership theory within deployed military units. Together, both leadership theory and organizational learning theory helped the researcher better understand and analyze how the Civil Affairs community learned and adapted as it matured (i.e., became an older organization).

**Significance of the Study**

Foley (2014) identified a lack of information about corporate organizational cultures and how military organizations adapted based on two types of organizational learning models (generative and adaptive; Senge, 1990). The researcher investigated how a military Civil Affairs community operated to determine if there was a learning organization within the larger Army force structure.

The researcher also added to the body of knowledge concerning learning organizations and military organizations to further the understanding of organizational learning within a military Civil Affairs community in a garrison environment. These efforts furthered the literary research efforts of Senge (1990) and Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996) concerning learning organizations by increasing knowledge of how participants in the examined population learned. It also furthered work by Foley (2014) concerning military organizations as learning organizations through the investigation of a military Civil Affairs community. The researcher added to the academic literature and the body of knowledge by providing further understanding concerning military organizations in a garrison environment. The researcher further complimented work by Schiena et al.
(2013) on deployed military units as learning organizations by providing a garrison centric perspective as opposed to a forward deployed military organization within a potentially hostile environment.

Potential applications for the research include increased awareness concerning organizational processes and identifying organizational training weaknesses. Current case study results provided a gauge to assess public sector and military organizations on organizational learning metrics. Replication of this study also provides military organizations an opportunity to identify internal weaknesses. This case study resulted in the development of the DLOQ-M, a qualitative interview guide alternative to the original DLOQ quantitative interview guide used by Watkins and Marsick (1993). Finally, current research efforts provided individuals and leaders a reference point to review their personal contributions to military organizational learning. This case study furthers the understanding of how individuals contributed to human capital expansion and learning.
Methodology

The researcher utilized a qualitative phenomenological research method to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs community. Qualitative research was the appropriate methodology to address and review experiences, including participant feelings concerning phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Two strengths associated with a qualitative methodology. First, qualitative studies provide better understanding concerning behaviors, values, beliefs, and assumptions (Choy, 2014). Second, the researcher could raise additional issues through broad and open-ended inquiry (Choy, 2014) and broad observations (Thamhain, 2014), and capture any processes used within the community under study (Prowse & Camfield, 2013).

The researcher utilized the seven dimensions of the learning organization (7DLOs), developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993), to understand individual learning within the organization. The 7DLOs have a 20-year employment history and utilization in several subsequent case studies. Researchers have used the 7DLO as a validated research methodology in several foreign countries, including Rwanda (Mbassana, 2014) and Korea (Song & Chermack, 2008). Therefore, the researcher considered the 7DLOs valid due to their long history and use in determining organizational learning at the individual, team, and organization level. The researcher found the 7DLOs reliable, as they have been used in studies for decades and have not changed since their creation. Furthermore, the 7DLOs employment history includes research of non-profit organizations that are associated with various religious (e.g., churches), which contributes to knowledge concerning different types of learning organizations (Pierce, 2012). The 7DLOs’ validity history and wide use as demonstrated above resulted in a reliable instrument to study
organizational learning within the U.S. military. Thus, the researcher decided to use the
time-tested questionnaire to help determine if the Civil Affairs community was a learning
organization.

**Research Design**

The research design was a non-experimental qualitative phenomenological design
intended to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual
learning contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs
community. The 7DLOs were used to understand learning within the organization. The
researcher created an open-ended interview guide from the DLOQ (Watkins & Marsick,
1993). As part of the research process, the author conducted 20 face-to-face interviews
and one telephonic interview. The modified DLOQ consisted of 29 questions, was
military specific, and was renamed the DLOQ-M. The researcher gained permission from
the publisher to reproduce the survey, including alterations, to create the DLOQ-M (see
Appendix A). The researcher requested a legal review from a regional Judge Advocate
General’s (JAG) Corps law office. There were no legal objections (see Appendix B)
regarding the request to conduct the case study. The researcher gained permission from
the Civil Affairs community leadership to do interviews within the Southwestern United
States (see Appendix C).

The target population was the Civil Affairs community within the Southwestern
United States. Interviews were conducted with unit personnel at different leadership
levels. This provided the researcher with an overarching organizational perspective. In
addition to conducting interviews, the researcher used observations and looked at
organizational art and pictures found in the organization that could contribute to unit
climate. Observations of artwork assisted in determining how these artifacts influenced
the units in adapting to changing conditions. Reviewing art and pictures aligned with the intent of a qualitative study by contributing to the understanding of how an organization’s leadership visually communicates and teaches members about their community.

The use of qualitative data collection required the researcher to conduct interviews with respondents. Data collection required the researcher to understand and produce meaningful and accurate data by transcribing hand-written interview responses. The researcher employed NVIVO to help code and identify patterns and themes in the data. Results represented respondent perceptions. Research findings from these themes will add to the organizational learning literature and help researchers better understand dynamics within garrison based operations as they relate to organizational learning.

Potential ethical considerations included the unit under study requesting individual names to improve further individual sections within the organization. Possible individual name requests presented an ethical dilemma since all interviews were confidential. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher focused on presenting recurring themes arising from the case study. The researcher aggregated data into the 7DLOs and did not provide individual names to anyone, including unit leadership. The focus on recurring themes allowed both the researcher and the unit leadership to focus on central topics and pitfalls at large, instead of potentially singling out individuals within the Civil Affairs community.

Before conducting any research, the researcher obtained approval for research through CSUs IRB process. The researcher also received permission from the senior unit commander within the Civil Affairs community to conduct research interviews. The researcher conducted interviews with 21 personnel from the Civil Affairs community on a volunteer basis. Interviewees signed a letter of consent explaining the type of research
and its purpose. The letter included an explanation of privacy, confidentiality, and an opt-out of research option to help further participant understanding of the research and interview process. To provide interviewees piece of mind, as well as encourage honest responses during the interview process, the researcher emphasized confidentiality associated with the case study at the beginning and the conclusion of interviews. The researcher and respondents determined dates and locations for interviews. The researcher will protect individual information collected for three years as per the CSU DBA Handbook (2013).

**Definition of Terms**

**After action review (AAR).** A form of review to identify how to correct deficiencies, sustain strengths, and focus on the performance of specific mission essential tasks list (METL) training objectives (Department of the Army, 1993).

**Learning organizations (LOs).** Defined by Senge (1990) as organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, and are continuously learning, collaborative, connected, collective, creative, captured, and codified (Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

**Mental models.** Deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or paradigms that influence worldviews and influence how individuals take action (Senge, 1990).

**Multisource (360) feedback.** A mechanism that provides individual leaders with information concerning how others perceive them and helps identify developmental needs of the individual (Gentry & Eckert, 2012).

**Military Decision Making Process (MDMP).** An iterative planning methodology to understand the situation and mission, develop a course of action, and produce an operation plan or order (Department of the Army, 2012).
**Organizational learning (OL).** A broad range of improvement tools and methods (Senge, 1990) captured by standard operating procedures, policies, and culture to sustain organizational memory (Watkins & Marsick, 1996).

**Personal mastery.** The discipline of continually clarifying and improving individual vision, focusing individual energies, developing patience, and viewing reality objectively (Senge, 1990).

**Staff rides.** Planned learning events that recreate a significant historical incident while engaging participants in clear reflection and dialogue (Becker & Burke, 2014), and align contemporary operational challenges with past historical events (Nunziato, 2015).

**Shared vision.** Creating shared pictures of the future that create a genuine commitment to the organization to a common identity (Senge, 1990).

**Systems thinking.** The conceptual framework, including the body of knowledge and tools developed over the last 50 years, to identify patterns to see how to change them effectively (Senge, 1990).

**Team learning.** Increasing collective intelligence through dialogue, knowledge sharing, and insight sharing amongst the collective, while undermining defensiveness patterns the impede group learning (Senge, 1990).

**Transformational leadership.** Term also known as relationship theory. Focuses on connections formed between leaders and followers, where leaders motivate and inspire subordinates to change by helping them see the importance and higher good of tasks (Malos, 2012).
Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Assumptions can be defined as things that the researcher accepts as self-evident or true without concrete proof (Ellis & Levy, 2010). This study had the following assumptions:

- The Civil Affairs community is a learning organization, based on the placement of the organization within a military structure.
- The U.S. Army collectively expects to follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) and orders.
- Because unit commanders exercise discretion on how they manage the unit under their command, there are variances and inconsistencies in unit climate and organizational vision.
- Variations significantly differ from the next higher command, or are not adequately nested according to command level, then the higher level senior commander has professional development discussions with subordinate commanders accordingly.

In addition to expecting military personnel to answer interview questions in a professional manner, the following assumptions were present in this study:

- Survey participants would not be deceptive with their answers and that the participants would answer questions honestly and to the best of their ability. Misrepresentation (i.e., not providing honest answers) hinders sharing experiences properly and diminishes the use of those experiences as learning points.
- The responses would be an accurate representation of the current situation within the Civil Affairs community. Soldiers interviewed were expected to
provide accurate information, as it is their professional duty to improve their organization continuously.

- The interview guide was appropriate to elicit responses relating to understand organizational learning within the Civil Affairs community. The researcher modified the original DLOQ with consent from doctors Watkins and Marsick’s organization.

Limitations are defined as factors that could cause the researcher to draw the wrong conclusions (Ellis & Levy, 2010). Limitations associated with the case study included the community under study itself. The researcher expected to use the questionnaire in examining other military units across different military organizations within the Department of Defense (DoD) and foreign military organizations. Due to the high operations tempo involved in the Civil Affairs community, the study was transformed from a quantitative to a qualitative case study, resulting in the modification of the DLOQ to the DLOQ-M. The researcher expected the following limitations in this study:

- Bias, including the researcher’s expectation that interviewees would answer questions in an honest manner during the interview process.
- The selection of organizational learning theory to examine a Civil Affairs community in the U.S. Army.
- The selection of choice questions from the DLOQ for the creation of the DLOQ-M to help gather additional insights into how the Civil Affairs community learned.
Delimitations are the intentional constrictions the researcher placed on the study that serve as boundaries in the research process (Ellis & Levy, 2010). The researcher expected the following delimitations:

- Interviews with the Civil Affairs community was delimited to only the Southwestern United States, limiting the demographic sample. To adequately sample the entire community, and get a complete community sample, the researcher would have had to travel to the states of Washington, North Carolina, and Georgia.
- The selection of random Civil Affairs community interview volunteers versus the choice of interview volunteers from the officer ranks that directly contribute to unit training and leadership positions.
- Use of the 7DLOs as themes to understand organizational learning using DLOQ-M responses. Using the 7DLOs maintains reliability and validity with previous research methodologies. However, interpretation of participant responses might be different if a different a priori coding scheme was employed.

**Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter 1 contained information on the case study background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, study significance, rationale for methodology and design, term definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. For the case study, the researcher referenced work by Foley (2014) that identified the gap concerning a lack of academic literature dealing with organizational culture and the way military organizations adapt. The researcher used the DLOQ-M interview guide to understand if a military Civil Affairs community was a learning organization. The
researcher used NVIVO 11 for thematic analysis to understand better how 21 interview volunteers representing their organization learned and adapted in a garrison environment. The results contributed to the body of knowledge for organizational learning and how military organizations learn. Chapter 2 includes a review of current research on individual, team, and organizational learning, as well as the limited available literature concerning military organizations. Chapter 3 describes the methodology, research design, and procedures for the investigation. Chapter 4 details how the researcher analyzed data and provides both a written and graphic summary of the results. Chapter 5 is an interpretation and discussion of the results, as it relates to the existing body of research related to the dissertation topic.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction and Background to the Study

Military organizations by nature are continuously learning and adapting to their environment based. AARs provide soldiers and units with feedback concerning missions and task performances (Department of the Army, 1993). There are limited recent academic articles or case studies concerning learning organizations and government agencies. There is even less academic discussion concerning learning organizations and militaries. Foley (2014) identified academic knowledge gaps between the field of organizational learning and studies associated with military organizations, which included a literature gap between the academic understanding of organizational learning and the military historian’s description of innovation and adaptation as represented by the Civil Affairs community.

In the following literature review, the researcher provides an understanding of the currently available literature concerning organizational learning theory and the limited literature addressing public sector agencies that include military organizations. In chapter two, the author provides a background addressing the historical overview of the problem based on the gap identified by Foley (2014). The researcher discusses literature concepts associated with learning organizations. These concepts include organizational leadership, learning organizations, individual learning, and public sector agencies as learning organizations.

The background for this research originated from previous research conducted by Foley (2014). According to Foley (2014), there is a literature gap between the academic understanding of organizational learning and the military historian’s description of innovation and adaptation as represented by the military Civil Affairs community.
Foley’s examination of the British and German armies during WWI described a gap in the literature regarding the civilian understanding of learning organizations and the military historian’s description of military organizational learning. Furthermore, work by Foley represented the most recent research related to a subject matter area that has few such case studies over the last 20 years. In the larger body of literature concerning learning organizations, previous researchers dealt disproportionately with the private sector even though there were pressure resemblances in military organizations.

The researchers’ literature survey included key word searches such as organizational learning, learning in public sector organizations, military learning organizations, team learning, individual learning, and learning organizations. Searches for academic sources associated with organizational learning included database searches in Columbia Southern University’s online library. The researcher used the Business Source Complete and Doctoral Dissertation databases available through the online library to research academic articles and previous dissertations associated with organizational learning. The researcher also searched through the Army’s Command and General Staff College online library database to search for instructional field manuals related to organizational learning.

**Theoretical Foundations and/or Conceptual Framework**

Organizational learning theory, as described by Senge (1990) and Watkins and Marsick (1993), was the conceptual framework applied by the researcher. The researcher looked at how individuals learn within the sample population and how the unit leadership adapted to changing conditions based on lessons learned. The Army captures lessons learned through the AAR process, which assists in the learning and adaptation process associated with the U.S. Army (Darling & Parry, 2001). The researcher also looked at
how leadership played a role in facilitating the organization’s learning environment to allow the Civil Affairs community to adapt to changing conditions.

In reviewing leadership contributions to organizational learning, the researcher explored which leadership theory, transactional or transformational, best described learning within the Civil Affairs community. Schiena et al. (2013) completed similar work in studying learning organizations and leadership theory within deployed military units. Together, both leadership theory and organizational learning theory helped the researcher better understand and study how the Civil Affairs community learned and adapted as it matured and became an older organization. The investigator also examined how learning contributed to the performance outcomes previously mentioned.

Through the examination of a Civil Affairs community within the U.S. Army as a learning organization, the researcher added to the existing body of knowledge addressing organizational learning within military organizations. The author also provided cross-pollination of knowledge and understanding between the private sector and military units. While the works from Watkins and Marsick (1993) and Senge (1990) provided a catalyst for assessing military organizations, to date, there has been little research completed concerning military units as learning organizations.

Review of the Literature

A literature review by the author in the area of learning organizations and military units between 2011 and 2015 yielded roughly 20 articles. Organizational learning literature concerning military organizations contained a handful of articles referencing reflection type processes such as the Army’s AAR process. Institutional authors, such as Department of Defense personnel writing for associated professional journals, traditionally examined military organizations for potential organizational or structural
improvements. These institutional authors presented a restricted scope to the intended audience within the respective fields. Another common source of information in this area are military historians who provide interpretation for historical events and outcomes through different scopes (e.g., individual battles, wars, or particular historical periods).

The comparative study conducted by Foley (2014) examining organizational learning between the British and German Army’s learning structure during World War I sought to bridge gaps in understanding between the public sector (e.g., military) and private industry learning.

**Learning organizations and organizational learning.** The concept of organizational learning has been around for several decades (Song & Chermack, 2008). Organizational learning and learning organizations are terms that scholars use interchangeably in current organizational learning theory literature (Ahmadi et al., 2014). Organizational learning is a process of change within organizations through the dynamics of exploiting old certainties and searching for or exploring new possibilities (Iarossi, Miller, O’Connor, & Keil, 2013). Watkins and Marsick (1993) define learning organizations as those that continuously learn and transform themselves to integrate gained knowledge concurrently with work processes. Watkins and Marsick (1993) further state that learning organizations occur in private, public, and non-profit organizations. It is within this broad organizational framework that military organization fell under public entities. Learning organizations were not only those that learned continuously and transformed themselves (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Individuals also drove themselves to continuous improvement through the lens of a teacher or steward (Senge, 1990). These two different organizational learning definitions, of organizational and individual
improvement, provide a framework for the literature review since they drive the varied niches within the body of literary works.

**Public sector organizations.** Academic researchers who examine public sector organizations contribute to a subtheme within the larger organizational learning discussion. The subtheme of government agency literature contributes to the understanding of local through national government agency roles in organizational learning. These organizations provide a public service while facing environmental pressures that use performance outcomes to measure success or failure. When government agencies experience budgetary challenges and delete or do not fund positions for the following fiscal year, they often rely on the available workforce to learn additional skills. Therefore, organizational learning is always affecting how well these agencies provide support to the public or customers.

Ahmadi et al. (2014) examined public sector organizational learning through a study of Noor (Iran) municipal employees. The authors used the Marquette Systematic Learning Organization Model (Marquette systematic model) to address organizational learning, people, technology, and knowledge as the core tenants as a research framework. The authors demonstrated that local government agencies engage in organizational learning by incorporating knowledge management, organizational evolution, and having a dynamic learning environment. The article introduced a different organizational assessment framework that complimented the organizational learning theory contributions of Senge (1990) and Watkins and Marsick (1993).

Bhaskar and Mishra (2014) explored links between work engagement and organizational learning. The authors stated that in public, private, or non-profit firms, organizational learning takes place where “the collective learning of people” (p. 542),
generated knowledge. The authors used DLOQ to examine a multi-national IT firm from Delhi’s Northern Capital Region. The sample population consisted of full-time employees who participated in an online survey (n = 253). Bhaskar and Mishra’s objectives were to “explore links between organizational learning and employee engagement and to examine how higher organizational learning leads to better work engagement” (p. 545). The authors indicated in their findings that organizational learning facilitates enhanced engagement by connecting the organization to the environment and empowering employees to take a greater role in their agency. Public sector organizations often face internal staffing changes resulting in role ambiguity.

In a quantitative study, Bernard, Osmonbekov, and McKee (2011) examined customer learning orientation and performance outcomes (n = 438). The authors described how organizational learning theory addressed the multi-level learning that occurred within organizations as public agency annual budgets decreased and remaining employees learned new tasks to keep the agency operational. Questions focused on measuring role ambiguity, the degree that management communicated customer service importance, employee’s confidence levels in meeting customer service needs, and employee job satisfaction. The authors’ findings indicated that individual learning from customer feedback, management, and natural learning employee orientation had a positive effect on overall job perceptions and job outcomes (Bernard et al., 2011). Organizational procedures often formalized rigidity within organizations.

A qualitative examination of organizational theory concerning government agencies showed that excessive organization within agencies potentially hindered the ability to change along with an evolving environment (Walle, 2014). The author noted that government agencies formalized procedures as SOPs, which served as safeguards
against losses in organizational knowledge and procedural deviations (e.g., restrictions) of organizational requirements. Walle used historical interpretation as part of the qualitative case study to understand how much innovation existed within public organizations to facilitate organizational learning. The author’s findings indicated that even within highly organized agencies, there was room for recombination of procedures that facilitated learning and SOP modifications (Walle, 2014). As public organizations streamlined to reduce waste by reducing personnel and departments, they did not always plan well for unexpected events or crises. Unexpected events facilitated innovation and organizational learning within public sector organizations (Walle, 2014). The following section examines organizational learning within military organizations, a specific area of the public sector.

**Organizational learning and learning within military organizations.** Within current organizational learning literature, there is limited academic literature concerning military organizations. As a result, the literature review in this section includes both current and dated articles to provide a comprehensive review addressing organizational learning and the military environment. In deployed conditions, military organizations relied on learning from events to improve operations, and gained new knowledge concerning their requirements, operations, or environmental considerations. Individual soldiers acted like sensors that helped increase organizational awareness within a unit and subsequently affected outcomes and mission accomplishment. In this respect, leadership characteristics often shaped organizational climate and unit performance.

Schiena et al. (2013) provided one of the few military associated works that sought to understand organizational leadership roles within deployed units. The authors discussed the effects of transformational leadership within a military unit’s deployed
environment and the unit’s ability to learn from their missions. The researchers used dimensions of a learning organization (Senge, 1990) to examine Belgian military units deployed abroad. Furthermore, the authors utilized the Learning Organization Questionnaire (LOQ) developed by Schiena et al. (2013) to examine the units through the organizational learning lens developed by Senge (1990). The researchers also used the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to assess leadership styles that contribute to learning. Schiena et al.’s (2013) findings indicated that within the context of life-threatening situations abroad, leaders had transformational and transactional leadership traits that contributed to creating a learning organization. The authors further noted that transformational leadership characteristics provided further growth potential for developing individual, team, and organizational learning (Schiena et al., 2013). In this respect, leadership roles are often molded early on in an officer’s career or during military education instruction at military academies.

A study by Offstein and Dufresne (2007) focused on inquiring and understanding how the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point approached moral-ethical development as part of organizational learning. The authors further sought to determine how the USMA integrated innovative and conventional practices to advance their ethical-moral development program. The authors visited USMA four times over an 18-month period to conduct in-depth interviews with a diverse population sample that included cadets and staff/faculty (Offstein & Dufresne, 2007). The methodology also included an examination of over 500 school documents describing the leadership system. The authors indicated in their findings that the university used moral lapses as case studies to create positive learning opportunities. This facilitated debate among students to enrich individual ethical and moral compass checks during conversations (Offstein &
Dufresne, 2007). This organizational learning developed the future Officer Corps into a force better equipped for dealing with future ethical challenges. The authors further indicated that the USMA model served as a human resource management (HRM) ethics review to assess HR practices in the private field and to facilitate organizational learning within the HR field. Accordingly, military organizations also relied on tactical “wargaming” to highlight learning points.

Vandergriff (2006) examined the influence of Tactical Decision Games (TDGs) as part of military education and performance improvement. The author’s historical approach examined past practices in the Prussian, French, United States, and German military education systems to ask how each country trained and developed their respective forces for combat operations. The author looked at the historical development and evolvement of each country’s education system that resulted in the present practice using TDGs to facilitate organizational learning. The researcher indicated in the findings that TDGs within the context of organizational learning provided opportunities for developing leaders on how to think instead of what to think. The author also indicated that non-tactical TDGs provide the civilian sector a methodology in developing decisive leaders and leadership within an organization (Vandergriff, 2006). Likewise, individuals within military organizations served as learning agency catalysts as discussed below.

Tremaine and Seligman (2013) discussed the Army’s Acquisition Corps as a learning organization. The methodology included a mixed method study consisting of both interviews and surveys (63-question instrument) to examine learning practices across 18 different acquisition programs within the Department of Defense (DOD) (n = 2125). Findings indicated that individual learning is the organization’s source of intellectual muscle that facilitated organizational goals (Tremaine & Seligman, 2013).
The authors further indicated that purposeful, timely, and active workplace learning contributed to success within the organization. The researchers also reported that negative feedback created toxic environments. The accurate, timely, and respectful feedback avoids negative connotations that detract from learning is critical in creating learning across all organizational cross-sections. Accordingly, ethics also played a significant role in government agency hierarchical structures.

Paroby and White (2010) discussed the need for creating ethical leadership within a hierarchical structure while addressing organizational learning theory presented by Senge (1990). The authors’ methodology looked at the U.S. Army’s culture in relation to the organizational learning theory framework. Combat situations required thinking commanders, which facilitated deviations from SOPs and other regulations or standards for mission accomplishment. Institutional ethical decision-making, education, and continued ethical learning leverage independent decision-making. The authors’ findings indicated that the Army harnessed the experience of its people as a learning organization to improve the way it operated (Paroby & White, 2010). A shared vision played a significant role in communicating organizational objectives and goals (i.e., mission). The authors also indicated that, through an ethical climate, accountability and trust deterred any potential self-interest that countered shared organizational vision. Likewise, self-reflection achieved through instructional rides shaped shared vision.

Becker and Burke (2014) examined organizational learning by discussing open reflection and discussion among Soldiers as a teaching tool for leadership and military strategy through staff rides. The authors highlighted literature gaps in the staff ride application for management learning and education. The methodology behind the staff ride involved taking personnel to a battlefield or some other historical site for onsite
instruction to highlight critical events and turning points. Keys to this process included purposeful open discussion and self-reflection that contributed to individual, team, and organizational learning. The authors’ finding indicated that staff rides focused more on the decision-making process with a detailed operational analysis. Staff rides complemented TDGs discussed previously and the AAR military process, which enhanced organizational learning. Becker and Burke (2014) further indicated that the staff ride process cross-pollinated into the U.S. Forest Service as part of interagency training, while providing a psychologically safe learning environment. Concurrently, after-action examinations complimented organizational reflection.

Darling and Parry (2001) offered a relevant discussion to the current author’s efforts by looking at the U.S. Army’s AAR process. The researchers examined the AAR process to illustrate how individual, team, and organizational learning occurred. The authors indicated in the findings that the AAR process presented an opportunity for organizations to understand what happened, why it happened, and how to improve in future situations. They further identified cross-pollination between public and private organizations by adopting individual learning frameworks. For example, Shell Oil Company adopted an Army-like AAR process in 1994 and other corporations like IBM, Harley-Davidson, Fidelity, and Geerlings & Wade followed soon after that. The authors also stated that these companies incorporated AAR-like practices to allow individuals to reflect on their personal and collective team failures and contributions to their respective organizations. Equally important was process tracing, which provided a methodology variance to the AAR process when examining outcomes.

Starke (2013) used cross-case analysis through process tracing (i.e., the causal chain and causal mechanism between results and variables). This methodology facilitated
learning among different agencies, and even countries, developing policy. Starke partially examined military innovation and learning amongst the U.S., Russia/Soviet Union, Britain, and Japan from WWI through the 1990s by focusing on domestic financial resourcing (Starke, 2013). As the respective national militaries learned from competition in the technological development and doctrinal improvements, policy diffusion affected development. The main conclusion from the study was that cross-case analysis within process tracing complemented policy diffusion studies (Starke, 2013).

Furthermore, understanding knowledge diffusion through information flow, as discussed by Foley (2014), concerning militaries during WWI provided different learning methodologies. Foley’s historical study represented the literature gap research effort for this dissertation. Specifically, Foley’s research concerning the British and German armies during WWI described a gap in the literature regarding the civilian understanding of learning organizations and the military historian’s description of military organizational learning. Foley examined the gap between the academic understanding of organizational learning and the military historian’s description of innovation and adaptation by asking how formal and informal education processes within the German and British armies respectively, affected learning and development. Foley’s methodology examined the education systems in Germany and Britain to identify how the two evolved during the conflict. Foley indicated in the findings that while both militaries continuously adapted to battlefield conditions and developed innovative tactics and techniques, they accomplished evolution within their respective learning frameworks. The German Army improved its formalized method of collecting lessons learned from battlefield reports and disseminated the information back to battlefield commanders, which resulted in “storm troop tactics” to effectively halt Allied advances (Foley, 2014). The British army’s informal education
system facilitated the development of creative ideas that included tank warfare and the incorporation of aircraft.

The concept of individual learning. Organizational learning theory involves individual learning, team learning, and organizational learning. Current literature addressing learning organizations is more abundant than current literature associated with public sector agencies or military organizations. According to Senge (1990) and Watkins and Marsick (1993), individual learning serves as the building block for progression from team learning into organizational learning. The following articles presented current academic discussions concerning the role of individuals within the organizational learning framework. In this respect, labor strikes provide an opportunity for understanding how individuals affect organizations.

Kleiner et al. (2012) examined organizational labor strikes and the loss of institutional knowledge within the McDonnell Douglas aircraft manufacturing company. The authors studied the relationship between labor strikes and institutional knowledge rates. Researchers used the learning curve theory to examine the manufacturing process in companies like McDonnell Douglas and Boeing. The authors examined production rates during a labor strike in aircraft production companies over a six-year timeframe. In the results, the authors indicated that institutional knowledge declines did not play as significant of a role as previously believed (Kleiner et al., 2012). Instead, information, or learning, gathered from individual experience (e.g., from laborer to managerial positions) affected organizational learning and an organization’s ability to improve policies. Likewise, changes in workplace procedures such as lean program implementation affected individual learning.
Sterling and Boxall (2013) examined how lean implementation at the Renaissance Company (i.e., a company in New Zealand in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry) affected employee learning and quality production through the ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) framework, which looked at employee performance. The methodology included a qualitative approach involving face-to-face interviews to address potential employee literacy concerns and examine how employees reacted to lean implementation practices. The population was five managers and 55 employees within the Renaissance Company. The authors demonstrated that the company enjoyed significant improvements in morale, productivity, and product quality after employees learned the importance of how lean methodologies contributed to the discussion on learning organizations. Concurrently, individuals learned from incidents in the workplace as they adapted to a changing environment.

Lukic, Margaryan, and Littlejohn (2013) examined the Learning From Incidents (LFI) process, which is similar to the AAR process. The safety industry perceived LFI as a vital learning mechanism in the safety industry for organizational learning in the workplace (Lukic et al., 2013). In this respect, Lukic et al. (2013) sampled 37 employees from two multinational corporations from the energy sector. The authors indicated in their findings that management perceived outspoken employees as more involved in the company. Consequently, these employees received better annual appraisals because they contributed to organizational learning by voicing their safety concerns. Additionally, individual learning through experiences contributed to improved operations and processes by fostering proactive individual agency (Lukic et al., 2013). Supportive coworkers and peers in the organization also increased individual learning.
Chang and Harrington (2013) examined the relationship between individual learning and social learning to study how firms introduced new product lines. By looking at the population within an organization from a longitudinal perspective, the researchers considered questions concerning the role that “innovation” (i.e., individual learning) and “imitation” (i.e., social learning) have on working towards a common goal (Chang & Harrington, 2013). The authors indicated in their findings that when people engaged in innovation and exploration, fellow employees participated in imitation within the workplace, creating a free-rider element (Chang & Harrington, 2013). Likewise, personal reflection affects individual learning while developing organizational learning.

Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013) examined the relationship between reflection and elements of organizational learning. The authors further discussed reflection’s role in developing organizational learning via the 4I framework: intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalizing. The authors used the two frameworks from Senge (1990) and Crossan, Lane, and White (1999) to develop a definition of reflection. Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013) define reflection as a complex process in which an individual deliberately becomes aware of old practices, explores alternatives, and is engaged in dialogue that explores shifting mental models, feelings, and actions. The authors developed a quantitative questionnaire to examine reflective practices in three organizations ($N = 360$). They indicated in their findings that individual reflection and learning implementation attempts were high while organizational structure impeded timely implementation. Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013) further reported that reflection creates individual learning and individual willingness to engage in constructive organizational questioning to improve operations and processes. Equally important was
that personal reflection enhanced the achievement of organizational goals, as measured through organizational performance and evaluations.

Nielson (2013) examined the role of performance evaluations and organizational performance among public sector organizations. Questions posed by the author included understanding which particular attitudes were affected by performance information and how these attitudes were affected. The researcher further examined how performance data changed managerial competing goal prioritization within public sector agencies. The author studied Danish state-funded schools and their principals concerning year-end academic exam results. The author indicated in the findings that school principals were responsive to their organization’s performance levels \( (N = 1,055) \) (Nielson, 2013). Nielson also stated that principals’ responses to performance information were dependent on their aspirational levels in relation to historical and social performance comparisons (Nielsen, 2013). As a result, individual principals in organizations became more adaptive to environmental performance pressures, increasing risk-taking measures to help meet evolving demands (Nielsen, 2013). Likewise, learning-by-doing experiences shaped individual behaviors.

A historical study of WWII Liberty Ship production examined the relationship between organizational learning and increasing individual experience (Thompson, 2012). The population samples were employees of the J.A. Jones Construction Company and the Delta Ship-building Corporation. The researcher examined transition periods (i.e., when the company hired new employees) and the production output rates during these transition periods. Thompson also looked at research questions concerning learning curves and asked if individual learning could explain organizational learning. Thompson indicated that firms could indeed maximize output by moving certain employees during
key periods to key positions. However, while new individual hires were able to master their positional skills within a short period, this did not necessarily support sustained increasing outputs (Thompson, 2012). Concurrently, socialization and individual learning rates affected learning-by-doing.

Mitomi and Takahashi (2015) examined the relationship between slow individual learning and increasing knowledge in the workplace. The researchers asked how socialization affected individual learning within the organization. The authors used a statistical decision theory model to analyze the relationship between these two elements. The researchers indicated in their findings that slow individual learning contributed to production stoppages from lack of proper knowledge in executing tasks (Mitomi & Takahashi, 2015). In other words, there was an optimal socialization rate that increased overall learning and expertise within an organization (Mitomi & Takahashi, 2015). Additionally, a firms’ ability in increasing learning rates increased organizational learning by improving individual knowledge and expectations of work related tasks.

Crick et al. (2013) examined the concepts of learning power, individual learning, and development through an examination of the effective lifelong learning inventory (ELLI) self-assessment tool. Questions discussed in the study further examined the relationship between employee engagement and the firm’s ability to increase learning capacity. The researchers assessed the ELLI questionnaire database by evaluating 5,284 responses across 79 organizations in the United Kingdom and Australia. The researchers indicated in the findings that the ELLI questionnaire was replicable in the place of work and useful for improving employee learning and increasing workforce engagement. The ELLI questionnaire helped enhance individual learning and structured workplace education programs aligned with corporate learning outcomes. Education realignment
contributed to creating a more engaged workforce within organizations (Crick et al., 2013). Similarly, team learning rates and performance shaped overall organizational learning.

Dayaram and Fung (2013), in a study of government employees in the Philippines, examined the impact of the three dimensions of learning on team performance ($N = 332$). The authors found that individual learning directly improved team performance and, thus, was the cornerstone of organizational learning. Additionally, a shared organizational vision was very influential in guiding individual learning activities, which served to mediate team performance (Dayaram & Fung, 2013).

Moreover, inter-organizational learning complimented organizational learning theory.

**Inter-organizational learning.** Inter-organizational learning (IOL) provided a further understanding of organizational learning theory. This literature discussed the symbiotic relationships within corporations or between corporations. Researchers expanded upon the OL concepts to provide different lenses to examine learning between agencies. Combinations (e.g., mergers) between firms often occurred as companies sought competitive advantages in their respective markets. Accordingly, understanding how industry leaders shape suppliers, and the symbiotic relationship between the two, is important for understanding organizational learning. There are a limited number of articles where researchers discuss inter-organizational learning within the last five years.

Kobayashi (2014) examined the interaction between Toyota and its suppliers. The author studied Toyota’s close relationships with suppliers to by using a Relational View (RV) framework (Kobayashi, 2014). Questions concerning relationship development approaches indicated that American car manufacturers picked suppliers based on cost, versus the Japanese practice of lowering transaction costs. Additionally, compared to
their competitors, Toyota had a higher number of guest engineers working in their plants – a practice that increased knowledge sharing (Kobayashi, 2014). The author indicated that Toyota used their internal production system to improve supplier coordination by creating strong long-term relationships. Changes in relationships resulted in inter-firm competitive advantages (e.g., product features, knowledge sharing, physical distance, special assets) instead of a focus on prices. Likewise, inter-organizational departments often evolved over time in a mutually beneficial manner.

Schildt, Keil, and Maula, (2013) examined how inter-organizational relationships evolved and changed with experience ($N = 110$). The researchers indicated that initial inter-organizational learning rates were initially weak, began to rise, and then waned after synergies were achieved (Schildt et al., 2012). Thus, relationships stabilized over time as partnered companies improved collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Similarly, Mozzato and Bitencourt (2014) examined the development of different strategic alliance and collaborative perspectives. The authors specifically asked how IOL occurred from a practice-based perspective. The methodology used by the authors included cooperation as an additional dimension to Crossan et al.’s (1999) analytical framework for OL (Mozzato & Bitencourt, 2014). The authors also reviewed available information concerning IOL and OL to describe IOL features and roles within OL. The authors indicated in the findings that the researchers broadened the IOL discussion by listing it as a fourth OL dimension with cooperation as the fifth dynamic of the learning process (Mozzato & Bitencourt, 2014). Secondly, social learning was a conduit for IOL occurrence between firms and organizations as it occurred in non-structured spaces (Mozzato & Bitencourt, 2014). For example, interaction in social spaces led to learning
episodes through everyday activities and discussion. Likewise, certain mechanisms, such as networking, shape inter-organizational learning.

Mariotti (2012) explored the nature and mechanisms of IOL. The researcher presented three concepts within IOL – learning to share, learning to collaborate, and learning to create inter-organizational knowledge. Mariotti found that the available literature on IOL was a complex overlapping mechanism between firms. Cooperation agreements or formal procedures did not always identify IOL methods (Mariotti, 2012). The author further described his proposed three concepts of IOL as deutero-learning. Deutero-leaning is defined as learning what the participant is supposed to learn while concurrently learning how things occur (Mariotti, 2012). This was applicable to the organization as employees gained knowledge on the how of learning together. Another finding by the author was that through collaboration efforts, individuals learned how to become members of a certain network and gain authority within the new hierarchy. Finally, Mariotti posited that firms might need to learn how to leverage external partners and relations as part of developing IOL knowledge (Mariotti, 2012). Equally important were the technological contributions to organizational learning theory.

**Knowledge sharing and information technology.** Knowledge sharing and information technology (IT) contributed to organizational learning both within and between agencies. Technology facilitated information sharing and exchanges to anyone who had access to such systems. When properly structured to collect and disseminate organizational processes and procedures, information technology connected individuals and served as an information host. IT further shaped employee engagement when properly organized. The following authors provided a better understanding concerning technology and organizational learning.
Jagasia, Baul, and Mallik (2015) conducted a quantitative study that examined factors leading to effective Communities of Performance (CoP) and business outcomes. The researchers designed questions that addressed the environmental influences, technological factors, people-related factors, and knowledge processes influences on CoP effectiveness (Jagasi et al., 2015). The study consisted of a 30-question survey on a five-point Likert scale. The authors used Survey Monkey for questionnaire administration. 1500 companies across varied industries in India received the survey. 620 companies responded. The methodology included examining individual, organizational, technical, and knowledge-based factors associated with effective CoP skill transfers. Researchers indicated in the findings that organizations with IT structures supporting knowledge transfer methods had improved information dissemination methods (Jagasia et al., 2015). Likewise, online education systems, which are part of a company’s technological infrastructure, shape organizational workforce learning.

In a quantitative study, Chan and Ngai (2012) used innovation theory to examine the influence of electronic learning among companies that adopted online education systems as a cost effective way to train their organizations. The authors examined the perceived importance on e-learning between early and late technology adaptors. The researchers also studied the relationship between the number of individual learners in early and later organizations adopting the technology. Lastly, the authors assessed the relationship in managerial support for e-learning and the social pressure to embrace such platforms between early and late adaptors (Chan & Ngai, 2012). The sample consisted of a random sample of 345 attendees at an e-learning conference in Hong Kong. This random sample methodology yielded 143 respondents, who completed structured questionnaires. Researchers indicated in their findings that organizations that promptly
adopted e-learning platforms had higher rates of managerial support and social pressure for improved performance. Management also perceived e-learning as a compatible platform for their organizations. The following authors discussed how employees’ perspectives of e-learning further shaped knowledge sharing practices.

Wong and Huang (2011) examined end users’ perspective concerning organizational learning and e-learning system service quality. In the quantitative study, the authors’ questions examined the positive and adverse effects of e-learning technology and system service quality on organizational learning, as well as e-learning system service quality on e-learning technology use and acceptance (Wong & Huang, 2011). The sample consisted of a pool of 300 quantitative questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale. There were 216 responses from Taiwanese companies who used e-learning technology within the last six months and had employees who received professional e-learning training (Wong & Huang, 2011). The authors’ findings indicated that the quality of technology service and e-learning satisfaction affected organizational learning (Wong & Huang, 2011). The authors also noted that e-learning accelerated organizational learning effectiveness along with higher levels of e-learning system service quality. Furthermore, learning activities (e.g., e-learning) are amenable to process tracing, which complements our understanding of learning behaviors within organizational learning theory. The following author discussed learning activities in organizations.

Mustapha (2012) examined how tracing learning activities facilitated learning within an organization. The author developed the Knowledge Flow Tracer and Growth Analyzer (KFTGA) program that traced individual user and knowledge flow resulting from topic or subject searches (Mustapha, 2012). The knowledge-building domain of the program facilitated organizational learning, knowledge flows, knowledge management,
knowledge transfer, and explicit knowledge (Mustapha, 2012). Specifically, the program allowed organizations to determine individual research levels concerning a particular topic and knowledge growth of the individual (Mustapha, 2012). The authors below examined knowledge sharing practices.

In a quantitative study, Abu-Shanab, Haddad, and Knight (2014) explored knowledge sharing practices and employee perceptions from the Orange Company located in Jordan. Questions associated with this study examined the influence of IT infrastructure, organizational policies, knowledge sharing practices, and motivation levels on organizational learning. The sample consisted of 59 employees from the Orange Company. The methodology consisted of using a 29-question instrument with a five-point Likert scale. The authors’ findings indicated that the influences of IT infrastructure, organizational policies, and motivation levels had neutral effects on learning. Only knowledge sharing practices had a positive impact on ongoing organizational learning. Concurrently, technology platforms also contribute to organizational learning. The following authors discussed web technologies.

Arh, Blazic, and Dimovski (2012) quantitatively examined the use of Web 2.0 technologies in support of learning activities using an organizational learning theory framework. The research questions explored the relationship between organizational learning theory and the implications of technology-enhanced learning on organizational financial and non-financial performance and results (Arh et al., 2012). The authors used an instrument consisting of 57 Likert scale questions. The sample included 1215 different Slovenian companies that had 50 or more employees. They stated in their findings that there was a strong and positive relationship between technologically enhanced organizations and higher levels of organizational learning (Arh et al., 2012). As
discovered by Petiz, Ramos, and Roseiro (2015), technological platforms also affect organization learning and how information spreads within an organization. The following authors explored communication technologies.

Petiz, Ramos, and Roseiro (2015) conducted a mixed-method study to examine the relationship between information and communication technologies (ICT) within an organizational learning framework (n = 52). The research questions dealt with understanding how information technology (IT) contributed to learning practices and how companies implemented processes for formal and informal learning using Web 2.0 platforms such as Wikis, blogs, or other social media (Petiz et al., 2015). The researchers indicated that both managers and staff believed that ICT provided a better idea collection method than simply waiting for meetings to communicate ideas and concerns, contributing to increased idea generation for the organization. The authors stated that managers believed that ICT added to increasing organizational understanding of players and the company’s positioning as a critical component of organizational learning. Employees and management also felt that formal and informal learning processes generated new organizational knowledge.

**Organizational learning and organizational leadership.** Leadership is important in organizational learning. The concept of organizational leadership has a direct effect on an organization’s ability to become a learning organization. Leaders play a significant role in supporting learning behaviors, or unknowingly act as learning inhibitors by not understanding their contributions to the organizational learning process. Leadership support for creating an organizational environment that fostered learning is essential to remain competitive. Researchers often associate transformational and transactional leadership styles in their organizational learning literature (Verlage, Rowold, & Schilling,
Likewise, personal management approaches influence organizational learning. The following articles contributed to the current author’s understanding of organizational learning and leadership styles. The next author provides a critique of the organizational learning framework presented by Senge (1990). Caldwell (2012) argued for the reconceptualization of learning organization as a combination of systems thinking and distributed leadership. The author critiqued Senge’s learning organization by arguing that the framework was fundamentally flawed, and did not clearly define links between leadership and learning, nor learning and organizations (Caldwell, 2012). The author’s questions include asking who initiated change (Caldwell, 2012). What practices define OL and learning? Do systems adapt and evolve themselves? Is change a self-organizing property of production or reproduction of systems? Caldwell holds that the organizational learning framework (Senge, 1990) cannot answer the identified questions, and, therefore, presented an uncritical method for examining learning organizations. Caldwell further stated that Senge also ignored that extensions concerning self-control, peer control in self-managed teams, and insidious practices of ideological control (i.e., cultural values, indoctrination, shared learning) were fundamental reconfigurations (Caldwell, 2012). In criticizing the organizational learning framework, the author purposes instead looking to leadership theory to affect organizational change. The following authors discussed human capital investments and OL. The following authors discuss managerial influence on learning.

Froehlich et al. (2014) showed that individual managers’ learning approaches influence organizational learning. The authors demonstrated that there was a direct correlation between learning approaches and learning outcomes. Questions within the
study examined the relationships between learning outcomes and informal workplace learning. Topics addressed included how personal attitudes concerning learning influenced workplace learning and how organizational leadership affected employees’ informal workplace learning outcomes (Froechlich, Segers, & Van den Bossche, 2014). This quantitative study sought to investigate how informal workplace learning, experience leadership style, and organizational learning culture interacted amongst each other while affecting learning outcomes. The sample consisted of 143 Austrian bank managers who responded to a questionnaire. The researchers indicated in their findings that there were positive effects of deep learning on learning outcomes (i.e., deep learning resulted in better learning outcomes). Transformational leadership stimulated subordinates in adopting an in-depth learning approach while transformational and transactional leaders complemented each other in developing positive effects on performance evaluations, core skill development, and career development (Froechlich et al., 2014). Accordingly, different leadership levels affect the interaction between agency learning and workforce behavior.

Sathyapriya, Prabhakaran, Gopinath, and Abraham (2012) explored the differences in organizational learning perspectives at different agency levels and the inter-linkages with employee behavior, organizational environment, and innovation. Questions by Sathyapriya et al. (2012) concerned employee perceptions and the linkage between proportional levels of OL and the level at which individuals functioned in the organization. The methodology consisted of mailing out 100 surveys to companies in the Indian cities of Chennai and Bangalore, resulting in 56 respondents. The researchers indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between employee innovation and individual motivators. The link shows a significant association between innovation
and organizational positions and responsibilities. The authors also found that communication of new ideas contributed to organizational learning. The authors concluded that if management encouraged innovation, employees felt free to innovate (Sathyapriya et al., 2012). Concurrently, interactions between managers and staff affect organizational learning.

Oberfield (2014) used quantitative analyses to examine the relationship between managers and followers using full range leadership theory (i.e., when managers establish patterns of transactional leadership, subordinates perform). The author’s questions concerned the relationship between transactional and transformational leadership with follower perceptions, experiences, and behavior. He also asked if transformational leadership was the more successful leadership style (Oberfield, 2014). The sample came from a million responses from surveys administered to federal employees through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Human Capital (FHCS) and Federal Employee Viewpoint Surveys (FEVS), which study management over time (Oberfield, 2014). The methodology looked at surveys from 2002-2011 with an average response rate of 52%, with a focus on sub-agency responses (Oberfield, 2014). The findings indicated that there was a strong employee action, perception, and experience pattern over time, representing active shaping forces on employee behavior (Oberfield, 2014). For example, in sub-agencies where managers incorporated full range leadership, there were greater gains in employee satisfaction. The findings also indicated that employees identified management leadership as either transformational or transaction. Employees who identified leaders as transformational leaders also viewed the same individuals as transactional leaders at other times (Oberfield, 2014). Although full range leadership theory was essential for capturing the constant leadership styles, Oberfield’s study did not
completely capture how different leadership styles influence subordinate behavior. The following authors discussed scenario planning.

Haeffner, Leone, Coons, and Chermack (2012) examined scenario planning, which is used to determine potential outcomes – what could happen- within given dataset, or known information. The researchers used the DLOQ (Watkins & Marsick, 1993) to study the characteristics in a learning organization as related to individual perceptions. The authors examined the relationship between individual perceptions and scenario planning in the promotion of inquiry, continuous learning, and employee empowerment as well as the ability to connect the organization with the environment, create systems to establish/share learning, and provide strategic leadership in learning (Haeffner et al., 2012). The sample consisted of 133 individuals participating in 10 scenario-planning projects across 10 different organizations (Haeffner et al., 2012). The authors indicated in their findings that six of the seven dimensions (i.e., continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, collaboration and team learning, embedded systems, empowerment, system connections, and leadership) had high positive correlations to scenario planning (Haeffner et al., 2012). The authors also indicated that overall, scenario planning was beneficial to organizational learning and individual perceptions of learning organization characteristics (Haeffner et al., 2012). Scenario planning is essential because it allows stakeholders to brainstorm about desired outcomes. Additionally, scenario planning is critical in creating flexible and adaptable learning models facilitate leaders’ adaptation to developing market conditions.

Verlage et al. (2012) examined the full range of leadership theory (FRLT) against implicit and other leadership styles to identify potential missing leadership aspects. The investigators asked whether any components of implicit leadership theories existed
outside of those already accounted for by the FRLT. They also examined whether these elements were relevant to organizational effectiveness. The sample consisted of responses from 694 German employees in the telecommunications industry, research facilities, and schools. A 360-degree feedback survey resulted in an instrument known as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Verlage et al., 2012). Findings indicated that there were 17 leadership categories extracted from the study, pointing out that planning, clarifying, team building, and strategic leadership was missing from the FRLT (Verlage et al., 2012). These findings presented future researchers with additional evaluation criteria to assess organizational leadership styles. The following authors examined leadership styles and learning.

Thus, Kellis and Ran (2013) studied distributed, transformational, and authentic leadership styles in public agencies. Until recently, public agencies lacked particular leadership theory that contributed to organizational learning. The authors proposed a public administration (PA) leadership theory that defined a new theoretical framework (Kellis & Ran, 2013). They studied the importance of three tenets (i.e., authentic, transformational, and distributed leadership) to support a PA leadership theory. Survey results gathered from the Federal Human Capital Survey administered by OPM from 2006-2010 provided research data (Kellis & Ran, 2013). Survey results from 45 Federal agencies measured job outcomes, organizational outcomes, and leader outcomes to determine predominant leadership styles amongst government agencies. The authors’ findings revealed strong correlations between transformational leadership and values-based leadership (Kellis & Ran, 2013). These finding supported the authors’ conceptualization of a PA leadership theory, which combines distrusted, transformational, and values-based leadership principles to the public administration
field. Equally important to PA theory is the influence of budgetary constraints on learning theory.

Duden (2012) examined systematic leadership in a small-medium sized German company. Duden asked how learning took place and how learning transitioned to understanding. The author used open-ended questions to help determine where and how learning occurred, as well as what elements hindered or advanced successful learning. After concluding face-to-face interviews, Duden used content analysis for comparative analysis to find cause and effect relationships. The author’s findings indicated that managers and leaders should act as role models by being authentic and believable. Decision-making should be transparent to create a feeling of reliability. Access to learning and individual development as well as involvement in its planning was essential to organizational members. It was also important to constructively and openly deal with failures using a solutions based approach. These combined elements contributed to building trust and learning in the organization (Duden, 2012). Moreover, establishing leadership development programs influence how organizations learn and develop.

Stockenstrand and Ander’s (2014) comparative study examined the pressure to justify an organization’s existence for funding in relation to funders, strategy, management control, and long-term organizational learning. The authors’ research specifically examined the life and work balance among musicians, strategy and control issues, and external relationships and pressures with funding (Stockenstrand & Ander, 2014). The sample consisted of 52 interviews from self-supporting British and state-funded Swedish orchestras from 2006-2008. The authors indicated in their findings that, compared to state-funded organizations, self-supporting agencies faced increased pressures for funding, contributing to a higher musician transition rate and the need to
stay relevant with musical selections (Stockenstrand & Ander, 2014). The self-supporting orchestras also experienced fewer risking taking by focusing on safe repertoires and decreased long-term organizational learning (Stockenstrand & Ander, 2014). Additionally, orchestras pressured to meet financial targets had difficulty engaging in programming risks as opposed to stably funded organizations.

Cocowitch, Orton, Daniels, and Kiser (2013) studied the application of a leadership development program implementation within Novant Health. The goal of the program was to double the corporation within five years by promoting new leadership talent from within the company. Therefore, the study started in 2005, and the population consisted of Novant Health employees. The authors examined Novant’s process of creating a leadership-training program. Findings indicated that Novant successfully created and implemented a development program due to high support and involvement from the CEO and executive team. When possible, using internal resources to set up and implement curriculum contributed to organizational language and tool sets, which further increased the success of the program. Having a constantly evolving leadership program required proper alignment to ensure learning and enthusiasm (Cocowitch et al., 2013).

The following authors discussed organizational learning in the healthcare industry.

Engler, Jones, and Van De Ven (2013) studied the Ascension Health Ministry process, which enabled management to design a framework that facilitated organizational redesign in a rapidly changing healthcare industry. Ascension Health, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, includes a network of 131 hospitals across 24 states and 150,000 employees. The authors looked at strategic questions developed by company personnel to address market challenges and learn how the organization gained knowledge from the design process. The authors’ indicated in the findings that teams learned about
redesigning and restructuring organizations through dialogue and reflection (Engler et al., 2013). Goal orientation towards learning was essential in seeking positive and negative feedback (Engler et al., 2013). Communal participation in creating and achieving collective goals facilitated organizational learning (Engler et al., 2013).

**Organizational learning and education.** Sung and Choi (2014) elaborated on the role of learning practices role in mediating mechanisms concerning firm investments in human capital programs. The questions addressed by the authors include an examination of relationships between innovation performances and corporate training expenditures, financial support for education, interpersonal learning, organizational learning practices, and individual learning practices (Sung & Choi, 2014). The sample consisted of analyzing 260 Korean companies from 16 different business sectors using archived data from the Human Capital Corporate Panel held by the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET) (Sung & Choi, 2014). The findings indicated that financial investments in corporate training programs significantly increased organizational innovation (Sung & Choi, 2014). The next author discussed lean learning.

**Learning behaviors and lean implementation.** Mazur, McCreery, and Rothenberg (2012) employed a mixed-method approach to examine learning behavior changes of frontline leaders across three hospitals during the implementation of the Toyota Production System. The research questions developed by the authors explored what behaviors and learning occur in hospitals during the early stages of lean implementation (Mazur et al., 2012). The sample consisted of three hospital staffs in North Carolina, yielding a 42% response rate. Mazur et al. conducted the study using a mixed-method methodology over a two-year period. They used semi-structured interviews and a survey instrument with a Likert scale. The authors’ findings indicated
that lean learning became realistic through successful results in tangible improvements, including a better understanding of logistical support requirements between Toyota and suppliers (Mazur et al., 2012). Reflection and internalization were critical for the individual transition from single-loop learning (i.e., linking a strategy to an action and result) to double-loop learning (i.e., re-evaluating goals, values, and beliefs in a more complex method), as well as becoming a social change agent (Mazur et al., 2012). The authors also found that as the level of frontline commitment increased, the individual advocacy for lean activities increased (Mazur et al., 2012). Additionally, triple loop learning (i.e., learning how to learn) influences organizational learning.

**Organizational learning and triple loop learning.** Petrovic (2012) provided a comparative review of single, double, and triple-loop learning processes as part of diversity management. The author indicated that triple-loop learning’s key purpose was to gain relevant knowledge concerning diverse, ambiguous, and complex managerial situations within organizations (Petrovic, 2012). The author indicated that triple-loop learning provided managers with relevant insights and knowledge about critical dimensions of management problems while providing an appropriate discourse framework (Petrovic, 2012). The next author discussed learning in organized religion.

**Organizational leadership and organized religion.** In a quantitative study, Piercy (2012) addressed gaps concerning non-profit organization learning associated with different religious denominations. The research questions addressed relationships between the seven dimensions of the learning organization and knowledge, financial, and mission performances of denominations (Piercy, 2012). The sample consisted of 159 ordained ministers, pastors, and priests of Christian denominations in the United States. The author’s findings indicated that strategic leadership in support of learning positively

The researcher provided additional knowledge about organizational learning in religious organizations. The following authors provided the foundation for organizational learning research.

**Seminal Works.** Organizational learning theory provided the framework for the previous literature review articles. Watkins and Marsick (1993) and Senge (1990) advanced learning theory through the three works discussed below. They gave researchers, leaders, and organizations a reference point to assess their operations. Their research allowed scholars and leaders the ability to assess where their organizations fit within the organizational learning theory model. Watkins and Marsick (1993) were the first to develop tools for examining organizational learning theory in agencies. Senge (1990) provided a systems approach (i.e., the fifth discipline) that integrates systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, and building shared vision.

In his book, Senge (1990) discussed learning organizations and the elements associated with creating a learning organization (LO). The author addressed the importance of paradigms and the shifts required to identify and assess improvement areas within and organization. To help readers and organizations transform their organizations into LOs, Senge identified five learning disciplines (i.e., systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning) using three levels (i.e., practices, principles, and essences). This book challenged how individuals, teams, and organizations interacted with each other through a continuously evolving business environment. For example, the author discusses systems thinking as a way to integrate
individual perspectives to the world and developing actions to create their reality (Senge, 1990). The following authors compliment LO academic research.

Watkins and Marsick (1993) described the learning organization and the four associated levels involved in organizational learning theory. These levels were individual, team, organizational, and societal learning. The authors provided a framework based on case studies across each of the above levels to help the reader understand how to create a learning organization through learning systems. The learning system’s key component was the individual. The individual was the starting point that helped create a learning organization. The authors provided a framework to create a learning organization and included audit steps for conducting internal assessments or audits to understand where an organization fits within the LO process. They provided seven steps (i.e., continuous, collaborative, connected, collective, creative, captured and codified, and capacity building) for each learning level that contributed to creating the learning organization (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). The authors furthered LO theory by presenting additional case studies in another work (see Watkins & Marsick, 1996). In their second book, the authors specifically focus on various companies.

In In Action: Creating the Learning Organization, Watkins and Marsick (1996) presented 22 case studies concerning LOs and how different organizations implemented OL in their respective agencies. Through these case studies, the authors addressed questions such as: Who should be involved? Where to start? What strategies worked best? How do organizational policies and framework need to change to implement OL methods? The authors’ case studies also addressed how to measure success, what allies to count on, and potential pitfalls and challenges in implementing OL techniques (Watkins & Marsick, 1996). The authors’ case study reviews disclosed that which level of manager
initiation affected OL change concerning barriers or delays to implementation. Next, the authors assessed the depth and intervention levels across the case studies and found that, at the individual level, there were action imperatives of continuous learning with strategies emphasizing individual learning. Team level learning produced enhanced collaboration, team learning, and learning between larger groups (Watkins & Marsick, 1996). Organizational level learning features included structures to capture and share learning, vision and empowerment, and organizational connections with a company’s environment or outside agencies (Watkins & Marsick, 1996). The authors also discovered an inverse relationship between the scope of the learning organization experiment and the size of the organization (Watkins & Marsick, 1996). For example, the larger the organization, the slower the organizational learning rates occurred.

**Methodology**

The researcher selected a non-experimental qualitative phenomenological research method to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning shaped organizational learning. Creswell (2012) stated that qualitative research provided an appropriate methodology to address and review experiences. Creswell identified qualitative research methods as best suited when examining participant feelings concerning phenomenon. Additionally, Creswell and Miller (2000) identified research participant statements as important in providing richer research data.

Choy (2014) identified several strengths associated with qualitative research methods. Strengths included increased understanding concerning behaviors, values, beliefs, and assumptions. Choy (2014) and Thamhain (2014) stated qualitative researchers could raise additional issues through broad open-ended inquiry and broad
observations. Prowse and Camfield (2013) said that researchers identify processes used within a population or community under study when using qualitative methods.

While conducting the literature review, the researcher identified the 7DLOs, developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996), as the best research method for this case study. The researcher learned that the 7DLOs have a 20-year employment history and several researchers have utilized the construct to conduct subsequent case studies. The 7DLOs help to understand individual learning within organizations while concurrently identifying improvement areas.

Mbassana (2014) used the 7DLOs to explore organizational learning in Rwandan universities. Mbassana used both a qualitative and quantitative version of the 7DLO’s to gain a fuller understanding of learning across five universities. Song and Chermack (2008) also used the 7DLOs construct in the Korean context to determine validity and reliability. The authors successfully assessed organizational learning within a Korean conglomerate using the 7DLOs, further validating previous research efforts (see Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

**Summary**

The available literature concerning organizational learning and military units was both limited and dated. The gap identified by Foley (2014) concerning organizational culture and how military organizations adapt presented an opportunity to expand research in this area. Work on organizational learning theory (Watkins & Marsick, 1993; Senge, 1990) served as the theoretical framework for examining a military Civil Affairs community as a learning organization. Haeffner et al. (2012) provided an excellent source for abbreviating Watkins and Marsick’s (1993) DLOQ instrument to create the DLOQ-M to examine a military Civil Affairs community. The proposal for public administration
theory, by Kellis and Ran (2013), provided a promising theory that potentially applied to the Civil Affairs community and other military organizations. Research efforts by Froehlich et al. (2014) provided understanding concerning the role of management in creating learning organizations and contributed to understanding how senior non-commissioned officers and officers play a part in the learning process. Equally important is how individuals shape their organizational environment.

Research conducted by Schiena et al. (2013) facilitated the understanding of leadership roles within forward deployed military units, emphasizing that transformational leadership roles best contribute to organizational learning. Paroby and White (2010) indicated that the U.S. Army harnesses individual knowledge and experiences to improve the operational environment and readiness. Likewise, research by Lukic et al. (2013) stated that individual knowledge contributed to organizational improvement through the Learning From Incidents concept.

Individual lessons and experience subsequently shape inter-organizational learning through collaboration and sharing as discussed by Mariotti (2012). Additionally, information technology facilitates learning between organizations as discussed by Chan and Ngai (2012) as well as increasing organizational innovation argued by Sung and Choi (2014). The above literature shaped case study research methodology to increase academic knowledge concerning organizational learning in a military Civil Affairs community. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology. The chapter begins with a summary of the research focus and purpose statement of the current study.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter three provides information concerning the research methodology, as well as the purpose of the phenomenological study, which explored the link between organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning within a Civil Affairs community. The study consisted of 21 individuals from a military Civil Affairs community, and helps fill the academic knowledge gaps between the field of organizational learning and studies associated with military organizations. This case study adds to the literature gaps identified by Foley (2014). Based on organizational learning models (Senge, 1990), Foley stated there was a lack of literature discussing organizational culture and how military organizations adapt (Foley, 2014). Furthermore, there is limited academic understanding of how military organizations learn as part of the larger framework of the United States Army.

Not understanding how military organizations (e.g., a Civil Affairs community) learn is yet another knowledge gap within the broader discussion addressing learning organizations. The current researcher bridged these knowledge gaps by incorporating concepts of organizational learning developed by Senge (1990) with concepts traditionally provided by military historians. The objective was to see if a military Civil Affairs community represented a learning organization. Therefore, the problem statement examined how concepts of organizational learning applied to the Civil Affairs community when discussing military (i.e., public sector) organizational learning. The remaining sections provide information concerning the problem statement, research questions, research methodology, and design, including areas addressing validity and reliability.
**Statement of the Problem**

The problem is a lack of knowledge concerning how organizational learning, individual learning, and leadership within a military Civil Affairs community affect organizational culture and learning. The lack of knowledge is a problem and represents a gap associated with a lack of understanding concerning how military organizations learn in a garrison environment. Although military historians have studied military organizations, they applied language traditionally used within the larger military culture. This poses a challenge in that, unless the reader is well versed in the military cultural language, clearly understanding how these organizations learn is difficult (Foley, 2014). In contrast to military historians, Senge (1990) and Watkins and Marsick (1993) researched organizational learning and provided academic understanding for private and some public sector organizations using non-military specific language. The significance of the current study is that it increases knowledge of organizational learning within a military environment. Specifically, studying the Army’s Civil Affairs community increases understanding of military organizations as learning entities in a garrison environment. The results of this research fills the gap by adding to the body of knowledge regarding individual and organizational learning within a military organization. Furthermore, the research results provide beneficial information to both the academic community and the military Civil Affairs community concerning potential data points for organizational improvement.

Current literature concerning public sector agencies as learning organizations was limited. Public sector organizations, including government agencies, required learning from individual experiences within the agency to adapt to evolving environmental conditions (Schiena et al., 2013). The availability of studies concerning military units as
learning organizations was limited further due to several factors, including limited access to such entities and the sparsity of relevant research. By examining a smaller military organization within the U.S. Army, the current researcher increased academic knowledge concerning government entities. The Civil Affairs community provided the researcher an opportunity to study public sector learning organizations, as well as contribute to the academic and military discussions.

**Research Questions**

Understanding how public sector agencies learn and improve operations is important to understanding how these kinds of organizations improve in the absence of traditional market pressures and produce profits found in private industry. Non-profit organizations realize profits in the form of improved efficiencies and customer service. For military organizations, these efficiencies and customer service improvements translate into the diffusion of knowledge across military organizations (Starke, 2013). Dissemination of organizational learning contributes to the crawl, walk, run mentality (i.e., crawl – technique introduced and demonstrated; walk – method practiced with limited instructor guidance; run – technique executed with combat speed) found within most military organizations to deal with operational challenges (Offstein & Dufresne, 2007). To understand how the Civil Affairs community learned within the larger context of the Army, the researcher selected the 7DLOs as the research construct. The researcher used an open-ended version of the interview guide.

The following research questions guide this qualitative study:

RQ1: How does individual learning influence the perception of team and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community?
RQ2: How does team learning influence the perception of individual and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community?

RQ3: How does organizational learning influence the perception of individual and team learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community?

Research Methodology

The researcher utilized a non-experimental qualitative phenomenological research method to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs Community. As discussed by Creswell (2012), qualitative research was the appropriate methodology to address and review experiences, including participant feelings concerning the phenomenon. Strengths associated with this methodology include increased understanding concerning behaviors, values, beliefs, and assumptions, which are better achieved through qualitative studies as compared to quantitative studies (Choy, 2014). Secondly, the researcher could raise additional issues through broad and open-ended inquiry (Choy, 2014) and broad observations (Thamhain, 2014), and capture any processes used within the community under study (Prowse & Camfield, 2013).

The researcher utilized the 7DLOs, developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993), to understand individual learning within the organization. This construct has a 20-year employment history, and several researchers have utilized the instrument to conduct subsequent case studies. The 7DLO have been replicated and used as a validated instrument in several foreign countries including Rwanda (Mbassana, 2014) and Korea (Song & Chermack, 2008). Due to its long history and use in understanding
organizational learning at the individual, team, and organization level, the 7DLO construct is considered valid.

**Research Design**

The research design was a phenomenological design intended to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs Community. The researcher used the 7DLO construct developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993), to gain insight on learning within the organization. As discussed previously, as part of the research process, the researcher conducted utilizing an open-ended, modified version of the interview guide. The researcher gained permission from the publisher to reproduce the interview guide for use in the current research effort, including alterations to create the DLOQ-M. To conduct the phenomenological study, the researcher requested a legal review from a regional Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps law office. There were no legal objections (Appendix B). The researcher also received permission from the Civil Affairs community leadership to conduct interviews within the Southwestern United States (Appendix C).

**Population and Sample Selection**

The target population was the Civil Affairs community within the Southwestern United States. The researcher coordinated interviews through the Army’s formal Operations Order (OPORD) process to request phenomenological study participants from geographically disbursed members within the Civil Affairs community in the Southwestern United States. The researcher requested personnel from the junior enlisted, senior enlisted, and officer ranks to participate in the phenomenological study. The
researcher interviewed 21 personnel for this study. The researcher coordinated interviews through the unit Brigade Executive Officer.

Voluntary interviews with unit personnel at different leadership levels provided the researcher with a better organizational perspective. The researcher sought to interview volunteers from various cross sections within the organization to provide a balanced response population. Therefore, this effort did not focus solely on senior military leaders, who provided their perspectives on their ability to influence training and learning outcomes. Added perspectives from junior personnel provided valuable information that helped in better representing organizational learning conditions at the time the phenomenological study took place. In addition to using a modified open-ended questionnaire adapted from the DLOQ to help understand learning, the researcher also examined observations and looked at organizational art or pictures that contributed to unit climate. The observations assisted in determining how these artifacts influenced the unit’s ability to adapt to changing conditions.

Before conducting face-to-face and telephonic interviews, the researcher discussed phenomenological study confidentiality measures. The researcher acquired informed consent from participants by describing the confidentiality process. For example, research information safeguards require data storage for three years and subsequent destruction when the storage window expires. Participants’ names remained protected by the researcher. When discussing the study or disseminating research results in the appropriate written and oral presentation formats to readers and audiences, the researcher provided general themes and recurring instances concerning the phenomenological study efforts. Before continuing with the interview process, in both
face-to-face and telephonic interviews, the researcher confirmed and reconfirmed with all participants their volunteer status and right to withdraw from the study.

**Sources of Data**

Qualitative data collection required the researcher to conduct interviews with respondents. This process further required the researcher to examine and produce meaningful and accurate data from the interview guide responses. The researcher employed the NVIVO 11 program to help code, identify patterns, and develop themes to determine how learning and performance outcomes contributed to organizational learning within a military Civil Affairs community. The results represented respondent perceptions. Consequently, the researcher was better able to describe characteristics associated with organizational learning within military units. The researcher used the thematic research results to help capture factors and actions that contribute to learning. Results from this study aid the researcher and other scholars in better understanding the dynamics of garrison based operations and organizational learning. Utilization of the interview guide and NVIVO best captured those elements associated with organizational learning within the Civil Affairs community.

**Validity**

Validity refers to the degree that a study measures what the researcher intended on measuring (Yin, 2014). Validity in a qualitative study includes methodological patterns described by Yin (2014), patterns that the researcher incorporated into this phenomenological study. These combined steps helped to strengthen validity for the phenomenological study. The 7DLO construct is considered externally valid due to its long history and uses in understanding organizational learning at the individual, team, and organization level. Additionally, the construct’s employment history includes gaining
knowledge concerning non-profit organizations associated with different religious organizations adding additional knowledge concerning learning organizations (Piercy, 2012). Because of the 7DLO construct’s long employment usage in both domestic and international studies, the researcher decided to use an open-ended version of the interview guide to help understand if the Civil Affairs community is a learning organization. By maintaining the 7DLO construct, the author addressed internal validity by preserving the original research design while allowing respondents to expound on their answers through expanded dialogue from the open-ended questions.

**Reliability**

Reliability relates to the repeatability of research and future researchers’ ability to reach identical conclusions given the same realistic conditions (Yin, 2014). By following the same methodological and realistic steps described in this phenomenological study, expectations are that future researchers will arrive at the same results. The researcher addressed reliability concerns by fully revealing data collection and analysis processes utilized. This process allows readers to judge reliability associated with the phenomenological study (Yin, 2014). Additionally, the 7DLO construct is considered reliable, as the construct has not changed since its creation over twenty years ago.

The researcher identified the 7DLO construct as the original research framework to assess organizational learning within a given agency. The researcher further discussed changes incorporated in the interview guide to examine the Civil Affairs community within the context of a larger military organization. In doing so, this research effort allows future researchers to replicate the same study with other military organizations or public sector organizations. To facilitate future replication as described by Yin (2014), in this chapter, the researcher documented the data collection and data analysis procedures
followed during this research effort. The documentation ensured the author achieved research reliability, and facilitated future reliability, by capturing both database information (i.e., responses to interview guide) and auditability (i.e., step-by-step operational replication) as discussed by Yin (2014).

**Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher utilized the 7DLO construct and the 29-question interview guide (Appendix D) to understand how a Civil Affairs community learns as perceived by its members. To finalize approval for administering the interview guide to research participants, the researcher gained approval from his committee, the IRB, and the unit under examination. Upon final approval from the aforementioned entities, the researcher administered the interview guide to volunteers within a Civil Affairs community in the Southwestern United States. The researcher coordinated data collection and interviews (i.e., face-to-face and telephonic) with 21 volunteers through the unit Brigade Executive Officer. No pilot testing took place.

The researcher coordinated arranged volunteer interviews through the Army’s OPORD process with help from the unit Executive Officer. So as not to distract from individual productivity, when possible, interviews took place during lunch hours, after regular duty day hours (i.e., normal working hours), or during designated training days as requested by the participating unit. The researcher asked face-to-face and telephonic interviewees to sign a consent form describing the purpose of their voluntary participation in the study. The telephonic interviewee emailed the researcher the signed consent form. The researcher then conducted interviews with all participants utilizing questions from the interview guide. The researcher recorded interviewee responses verbatim and only asked follow-on questions when respondents used vague words such
as “they” or “them.” The researcher asked participants to explain who they were discussing when using the words “they” or “them” when addressing leadership, NCOs, or the organization as a whole.

The researcher will keep all hard copies of handwritten notes, research, and related documents in storage for three years as per the CSU Handbook (2013). To meet the three-year CSU record keeping requirement, the researcher also scanned and backed up all paper documents for digital storage on an external hard drive. Upon conclusion of the required three-year timeframe, the researcher will burn paper documents and digital copies to ensure the protection of all participant information.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The researcher utilized the interview guide to understand better, how individual learning contributes to organizational learning in the military organization under examination. During the interview process, the researcher had interviewees validate handwritten notes and responses created during the interview. Because the researcher had a firm grasp of the problem under study, he was able to separate relevant information from non-pertinent information and details during the interview process and observations.

To conduct the data analysis, the researcher manually prepared and organized data collected through the semi-structured interview guide displayed in Appendix D. To create a list of important or significant interviewee statements, the researcher described and took note of personal impressions and observations regarding the phenomenon under examination. These procedures helped in providing a comprehensive description of organizational learning in a military organization.

The researcher then coded the responses to identify patterns in determining how learning and performance outcomes contributed to organizational learning within a
military Civil Affairs community. This required the researcher to examine the information collected and produce meaningful and accurate data from the transcription of handwritten interview responses and notes; data included observations and organizational art interpretations. NVIVO 11 data analyses produced thematic analysis results that represented respondent perceptions. Results from the NVIVO 11 thematic analysis provided the researcher with the ability to describe characteristics associated with organizational learning in the Civil Affairs community. NVIVO 11 results helped answer how individual learning contributed to the team and organizational learning (7DLOs). To facilitate visual understanding by readers and future researchers, the researcher provides data results in a table and chart diagrams.

**Ethical Considerations**

Potential ethical considerations pertain to participant protection from harm, informed consent, the right to privacy, and honesty amongst professional participants and the researcher. The researcher obtained permission from Watkins and Marsick (1993) to use the DLOQ instrument for use in this phenomenological study. The researcher conducted interviews with 21 personnel from the Civil Affairs community on a strict volunteer basis. The researcher obtained participant consent before starting the interview process. The researcher provided participants with private and confidential statements advising them of individual anonymity during the semi-structured interview. To maintain participants’ anonymity, the researcher focused on presenting recurring themes arising from the phenomenological study to unit leadership and the reader. Providing recurring themes encouraged both the researcher and unit leadership to concentrate on organizational themes and pitfalls at large, instead of potentially singling out individuals within the Civil Affairs community.
The researcher also gained approval for research through the assigned committee and CSU’s IRB process before conducting any research. The researcher obtained permission from the senior unit commander within the Civil Affairs community carry out research interviews. The researcher will store individual information collected for three years according with University guidelines. The researcher scanned all documents and will store digital copies on an external hard for three years. The researcher will store paper documents in a designated filing cabinet for three years. Upon expiration of the three-year research documentation storage, the researcher will destroy all papers and the external hard drive.

This phenomenological study did not violate principles (i.e., respect for persons, beneficence, and justice) from the Belmont Report. The researcher did not coerce, force, or otherwise intimidate volunteers for participation in the research effort. Furthermore, the researcher treated participants fairly, and participants gained a better understanding concerning their role in organizational learning. Involvement in this phenomenological study enhanced both academic and public sector (e.g., military) understanding concerning organizational learning.

Limitations

Limitations associated with the phenomenological study included the community under study itself. The researcher expected that multiple military units across different military organizations within the Department of Defense (DoD) and foreign military organizations could utilize the questionnaire for internal examination. Due to the high operations tempo involved in the Civil Affairs community, the study was transformed from a quantitative study to a qualitative phenomenological study, resulting in the
modification of the interview guide. The researcher expected the following limitations and delimitations in this study.

Bias included the researcher’s expectation that interviewees answered questions in an honest manner during the interview process. The survey of the Civil Affairs community was delimited to only the Southwestern United States, limiting the demographic sample. To get a complete sample of the Civil Affairs community, the researcher would have had to travel to the states of Washington, North Carolina, and Georgia.

Selecting organizational learning theory to examine a Civil Affairs community in the U.S. Army was also a delimiting factor because the unit had available personnel with sufficient time in garrison to participate in the study before the next scheduled deployment. The selection of choice questions from the DLOQ for the creation of the DLOQ-M to help gather additional insights into how the Civil Affairs community learns was another delimitation because potential time constraints associated with the interview process. The selection of random Civil Affairs community interview volunteers versus the selection of interview volunteers from solely within the officer ranks that directly contribute to unit training and leadership positions provided an additional delimiting factor. In doing so, the researcher gained a broader interviewee response perspective for thematic analysis.

These limitations were unavoidable due to the operational environment associated with the unit under examination. The unit has a high operational tempo, which results in frequent personnel turnover/rotation, extended duty hours, and a limited pool of available personnel. The study’s small sample size was related to the existing small Civil Affairs population size, geographical displacement and dispersal
of the organization, and the unavailability of deployed personnel. Due to the sample participants’ diversity of rank and expected candid candor from the military service members, none of these limitations were expected to impact the researcher’s efforts negatively.

Summary

The researcher conducted a non-experimental qualitative phenomenological study comprised of 21 individuals from a military Civil Affairs community. The current research helps fill the academic knowledge gaps between the field of organizational learning and studies associated with military organizations. The researcher incorporated organizational learning concepts established by Senge (1990) with concepts traditionally provided by military historians to see if a military Civil Affairs community represented a learning organization. The researcher utilized a phenomenological research method to understand how organizational learning, individual learning, and performance outcomes contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs community.

Qualitative research was the appropriate methodology to address and review experiences, including participants’ feelings concerning phenomenon as discussed by Creswell (2012). The researcher used the 7DLO construct, externally validated through its long history and use, to understand organizational learning at the individual, team, and organization level. The researcher administered the interview guide to understand how individual and team learning contributed to organizational learning within a military Civil Affairs Community. The researcher also utilized the NVIVO 11 program to help code and identify patterns from the interview responses gathered. Chapter 4 will present results that examine whether the military Civil Affairs community is or is not a learning organization.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of the non-experimental phenomenological study was to explore the perception of organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning within a Civil Affairs community. In Chapter 4, researcher discusses a summary of the collected data, data analysis, and results. The study consisted of 21 volunteers (i.e., junior enlisted, senior enlisted, and officers) from a military Civil Affairs community in the Southwestern United States. The researcher coordinated interviews through the Army’s formal OPORD process to request phenomenological study participants from geographically disbursed members within the Civil Affairs community. This study sought to provide additional knowledge concerning a literature gap identified by Foley (2014), who stated there was a lack of information about organizational culture and how military organizations adapt. Foley based his research on two types of organizational learning models: generative and adaptive (Senge, 1990). In addition to the literature gap, there is also little academic understanding of how military organizations learn as part of the larger framework of the United States Army. The researcher bridged these knowledge gaps by incorporating Senge’s (1990) concepts of organizational learning with concepts traditionally provided by military historians to see if a military Civil Affairs community represented a learning organization. The researcher’s problem statement presented a starting point for developing a link between the gap Foley (2014) identified and improved understanding of learning organizations.

The following problem statement shaped the case-study framework. The problem is a lack of knowledge concerning how organizational learning, individual learning, and leadership within a military Civil Affairs community affect organizational culture and
learning (Foley, 2014). Therefore, the study examined how concepts of organizational learning applied to the Civil Affairs community when discussing military (i.e., public sector) organizational learning. The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

RQ1: How does individual learning influence the perception of team and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs community?

RQ2: How does team learning influence the perception of individual and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs community?

RQ3: How does organizational learning influence the perception of individual and team learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs community?

The 7DLOs, as described by Watkins and Marsick (1993), were identified by the first 22 questions at the beginning of the interview guide to help understand RQ1 through RQ3. These seven dimensions are: strategic leadership, system connection, empowerment, embedded systems, team learning, dialogue and inquiry, and continuous learning (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). In previous case studies, the seven dimensions were examined using the traditional DLOQ. For the current case study, these dimensions were understood through administration of the DLOQ-M.

The researcher utilized a phenomenological research methods to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs Community. The researcher utilized the interview guide to understand individual learning within the organization.
Interview participants answered 29 questions from the instrument. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The following sections provide information concerning how the researcher conducted the investigation process and the results of the 21 volunteer interviews. The study sample was selected based on Civil Affairs unit availability for case study participation and from personnel who were available for participation at the time of the research.

**Descriptive Data**

The target population was a Civil Affairs community located within the Southwestern United States. The researcher coordinated interviews through the Army’s formal OPORD process to request phenomenological study participants from geographically dispersed members within the Civil Affairs community. The researcher requested participants from junior enlisted, senior enlisted, and officer ranks to participate in the phenomenological study. The participating brigade provided 21 personnel from a potential pool of over 1300 personnel. Voluntary interviews with unit members at different leadership levels provided the researcher with a better organizational perspective. Thus, to provide a balanced response, the researcher sought to interview volunteers from various cross sections within the organization. This effort did not focus solely on senior military leaders, who provided their perspectives on their ability to influence training and learning outcomes. The inclusion of perspectives from junior personnel provided valuable information, which helped in better representing organizational learning conditions at the time the phenomenological study took place.

The researcher used a modified open-ended interview guide to help measure learning. The researcher coordinated volunteer interviews through the unit Brigade
Executive Officer. Additionally, the researcher discussed phenomenological study confidentiality measures through 21 face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview.

The researcher acquired informed consent from participants after describing the confidentiality process. Research information safeguards require data storage for three years and subsequent destruction when the storage window expires. Participant names remain protected by the researcher, who provided general themes and recurring instances concerning the phenomenological study efforts in the appropriate written and oral presentation formats to readers and audience. In both face-to-face and telephonic interviews, the researcher reconfirmed with all participants their volunteer status prior to continuing with the interview process.

The researcher outlined participant demographic information as follows. The research sample consisted of four female soldiers and 17 male soldiers. One female was a non-commissioned officer sergeant (E-5), two were chief warrant officers (CW-2), and one was a field grade officer major (O-4). Of the male participants, nine were officers between the ranks of captain (O-3) and major (O-4) and eight were non-commissioned officers (i.e., enlisted) between the ranks of sergeant (E-5) and sergeant first class (E-7). Given that the Civil Affairs community is a composed of mostly midgrade to senior enlisted and officers, the researcher focused on responses by rank instead of age. Rank provided a better understanding concerning participants’ viewpoints of their organization. Table 1 depicts the participant rank structure that contributed to the formulation of this study, mirroring the rank heavy structure of the Civil Affairs community. Differences in rank structure provide snapshots of individual experience, reflecting the overall Civil Affairs community’s ability to nest organizational goals, strategic messages, mission statements, and culture down to the lowest level. Nesting affects, and reflects, how
individuals learn, which further affects how different teams learn and how teams aggregately contribute to organizational learning.

Table 1.

*Participants by Rank*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>E-5</th>
<th>E-6</th>
<th>E-7</th>
<th>CW-2</th>
<th>O-3</th>
<th>O-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officer (Enlisted)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 illustrates the gender distribution among participants in the Civil Affairs community.

Table 2.

*Participants by Rank and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officer (Enlisted)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The author reflected on the participants’ responses as they provided their answers to the interview questions. During the interview, the researcher hand recorded participant responses onto the interview guide. To validate answers to research questions and mitigate transcription sources of error, the researcher confirmed written responses with interviewees at the conclusion of the interview. At the end of each interview, the researcher typed responses and notes into the NVIVO 11 Microsoft Word shell. After all
interviews were complete, the researcher imported the interview transcripts and coded respondent statements using NVIVO 11. This coding process enabled the researcher to identify theme patterns to describe participant perceptions concerning the Civil Affairs community as a learning organization. The researcher used participant responses to help answer the research questions. The analysis revealed recurring themes that nested within the 7DLOs.

The author organized this chapter according to the 7DLOs construct and associated underlying themes identified from the analysis. The researcher manually transcribed and analyzed responses to individual questions to identify common themes. The researcher then nested the interview responses to the 7DLO themes, or nodes, related to the specific concentration areas within the research instrument. The researcher coded subthemes, or child nodes, from individual questions from each subsection theme. The researcher coded participant responses to each subtheme accordingly. Themes were used to capture related statements for each question as meaningful units for subsequent evaluation.

Participants’ individual question responses were combined to create cumulative answers for each question. Individual participant responses are presented as P1 through P21. From these cumulative responses, the researcher read the responses to deduce their meaning. The researcher also looked at various ways in which respondents experienced the phenomenon and wrote down observation notes to include in the analysis. The researcher used the 7DLOs as themes (see Table 3) within the interview guide subsections to help understand learning in the sample population. Additionally, the researcher coded field observation notes. The researcher associated notes with relevant interview guide sections, which enhanced understanding of organizational learning.
Results

The researcher used the 7DLO’s nested within the interview guide section. Then classified interview responses within the 7DLOs in the interview guide. Each research instrument section corresponds to the respective research question previously presented. Research questions are referred to as RQ1 through RQ3. Table 3 outlines the results by matching sections to themes for quicker review.

Table 3.

*Thematic Analysis Outline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section One (RQ1)</td>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> Continuous Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> Dialogue and Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Two (RQ2)</td>
<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> Team Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theme 4:</strong> Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Three (RQ3)</td>
<td><strong>Theme 5:</strong> Embedded Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theme 6:</strong> Strategic Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theme 7:</strong> Systems Connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section One (RQ1).**

Two themes were identified: (a) continuous learning, and (b) dialogue and inquiry.

*Theme 1: Continuous Learning.*

Participants identified various continuous learning methods through their individual responses. Respondents within the Civil Affairs community continuously learn through personal interactions with other unit personnel, by participating in formal and informal meetings, and through dedicated scheduled training times. Respondents identified specifically designated training times set aside by leadership to ensure that individuals have sufficient time to train on either individual tasks or collective tasks.
Participants repeatedly identified Thursdays as the designated training day that coincides with “Sergeant’s Time Training”, a dedicated sergeant section training on the weekly training calendar. In this facilitative learning setting, the Civil Affairs community executes dedicated individual training and shares lessons learned through various venues. The organizational culture included embedded individual learning, which allowed soldiers to learn and practice their respective job duties weekly. Interview participants also described openly talking about mistakes as learning points in discussions with fellow soldiers. While the Civil Affairs community is a hierarchal organization, individuals received coaching and mentoring from both their supervisors and peers, which facilitated continuous learning.

Continuous learning affects individual learning through the maintenance of relevant and updated institutional knowledge (Kleiner et al., 2012). Through updated processes, individuals learn about current best practices in their current organization. As discussed by Chang and Harrington (2013), continuous learning also reduces the free-rider problem by helping soldiers understand their assignments, versus simply copying social behaviors. An example of the free-rider problems is when an individual benefits from a resource but does not contribute to the maintenance or acquisition of that resource. This is important because continuous learning contributes to individual readiness in performing future mission sets. Respondents’ descriptions of social interactions and learning further supported concepts reported by Mitomi and Takahashi (2015) that link workplace socialization and increased organizational expertise. Weekly scheduled training days reflected the concept of linking workplace education and training with corporate learning outcomes (see Crick et al., 2013).
Several interview respondents identified individual learning methods such as peer-to-peer learning, one-on-one discussions, sharing experiences, or some other close individual exchange. Seven respondents identified working together as an individual learning mechanism. Four respondents listed sensing sessions as mediums for individual learning. P8 stated, “some individuals are natural at teaching and enjoying knowledge on an informal basis.” In addition, P10 stated, “informally soldiers discuss with both peers and supervisors mistakes and how to prepare them for individual development.” P16 said that “if a soldier don’t ask, why they will never learn.” P19 said, “soldiers that go to school brings information back and teaches other soldiers.”

**Theme 2: Dialogue and Inquiry.**

Participants identified several methods for dialogue and inquiry within their organization as army learning vehicles to improve personal understanding. Individuals learned through the Army’s traditional education system, institutional information analysis formats, and the use of Army doctrine and methodology. Sixteen participants regularly described the AAR process as a contributor to individual learning through dialogue and inquiry exchanges. Interviewees also identified formal school environments as periods for active discussions.

Complementing the formal and informal education system was encouragement from leadership to have individuals participate in higher education or certification programs to help broaden their studies and perspectives. Interview participants worked in a community reflective of the larger Army, which encourages personal development. Interview participants also described participating in open dialogue and inquiry discussions through open forums, sensing sessions, face to face discussions, and the
“open door” policy of the leadership. Several soldiers also discussed team building events as situations encouraging discussions and getting to know each other.

Participant discussions concerning the AAR process and classroom setting reflect concepts discussed by Schiena et al. (2013) concerning the molding of careers through formal and informal settings. The holistic approach to personal development (e.g., individual dialogue, AARs, formal military and academic education systems) support concepts discussed by Vandergriff (2006), in teaching individuals how to think, instead of what to think. Dialogue and inquiry descriptions by participants also reinforce Paroby and White’s (2010) discussion concerning how military organizations harness the intellectual power for their soldiers for mission accomplishment and operations improvement.

The AAR process was the most often cited dialogue, and the inquiry learning mechanism was mentioned by a majority of participants. P2 stated, “generally, we have AAR sessions to discuss mistakes.”

Section Two (RQ2).

Two themes were identified: (a) team building, and (b) empowerment.

Theme 3: Team Building.

Interviewee answers to questions within this theme identified several ways in which teams contributed to their organization. Respondents described team building during meetings and through the AAR process, where participants analyzed newly gained information to consider effects on the mission or team requirements. Responses included the In-Process Review (IPR), team meetings, examining newly gained information, and the ability to revise group goals after discussions with the appropriate leadership. When team analysis led to modified goals or the need to adjust goals, teams presented their
findings to their respective leadership for approval. Outside of rank structure, team members felt their recommendations received equal consideration; they felt they were treated equally within the team. This environment allowed Civil Affairs community teams to develop new knowledge contributing to organizational learning.

Respondent descriptions for team building reinforced the self-reflection concept discussed by Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013) in which individual learning contributed to team and organizational learning. Interviewee responses also resonated with the Crick et al. (2013) discussion that individual and team learning result in a more engaged workforce. Participant answers reinforced work by Dayaram and Fung (2013), who stated individual and team learning were the cornerstones of organizational learning. Respondent answers further reinforced discussions concerning how individuals learned to become team members and organizational members through working together in the workplace (Mariotti, 2012).

Eight participants cited organizational events such as physical training and team building events as events where individuals contributed to team building. Many participants felt that the command or organization would act upon recommendations that they submitted to organizational leadership. Eleven participants felt that teams revised their thinking when provided with updated information. Additionally, most participants felt that, within the constraints of visible rank structure, team members were treated equally. The following respondents provided some unique statements concerning equality. P3 stated, “some teams do well at fostering a spirit of comradery which naturally leads to feelings of equality.” P5 said, “this particular unit maintains the most positive culture I’ve seen in the Army.” Conversely, P7 said of the organization, “they
don’t treat everyone as equals – if the unit treated everyone as equals, regardless of rank, rank would become meaningless.”

**Theme 4: Empowerment.**

Respondents identified several methods describing empowerment collectively. As stated previously, the AAR is an important mechanism for facilitating learning and empowerment within the Civil Affairs community. Another formal mechanism repeated by interviewees include the MDMP process through which military personnel identify, research, and select appropriate courses of action for a given problem set. Implementing lessons learned and recommendations provided another method to empower personnel.

By working together or during problem-solving scenarios, teams learned and gained new knowledge to enhance their respective organizational contributions. This resulted in different team/individual empowerment and recognition methods such as awards, coins, certificates, and public recognition during formations. Additionally, respondents also discussed communicating with their chain of command concerning the selection of future career enhancing job assignments. Some respondents also discussed either having the ability to, or giving the ability to fellow team members, in selecting daily required tasks.

Participant descriptions of AARs, MDMP, and meetings reflect highlights discussed by Offstein and Dufresne (2007) concerning the value of debate and discussion amongst team members. The ability to shape discussions and outcomes empowers participants during the discussion process, allowing them to adapt to environmental pressures as discussed by Neilson (2013). Respondent answers also reinforced work by Dayaram and Fung (2013), who examined employee participation as a cornerstone of organizational learning. Mariotti (2012) also discussed the impact of employee
discussions and interaction in developing IOL knowledge. The AAR and MDMP processes both increases organizational knowledge and empowers participants through organizational collaboration.

Ten respondents intimated that teams learned collectively through scheduled organizational meetings where new ideas and information facilitated learning, contributing to a sense of empowerment. Eleven participants also stated that by working together they were able to learn collectively and improve as a team. Thirteen participants stated that the unit rewarded learning teams with organizational awards such as award coins, recognition certificates, and public recognition in front of the group during formations. Finally, thirteen interviewees intimated that team implemented recommendations contributed to a learning environment. This contributed to an increasing sense of empowerment through the adoption of team member recommendations. P18 said, “soldiers more often request a desired work assignment rather than the command present the options.” P3 stated, “when a soldier is ready to PCS or do an inter-post transfer, the command tries to give them a few options to look into their job choices.”

Section Three (RQ3).

Three themes were identified: (a) embedded systems, and (b) strategic leadership, and (c) system connection.

Theme 5: Embedded Systems.

Respondents described several embedded systems (e.g., electronic platforms) utilized as part of the organizational learning process. Platforms ranged from daily email traffic to create awareness concerning issues to the use of electronic portals, unit websites, shared drives, and electronic version trackers, such as Microsoft Excel
spreadsheets. Responses also included references to larger army electronic systems such as the Army’s Digital Training Management System (DTMS), which tracks an individual’s current training and education. Similarly, interviewees identified individual Officer Record Briefs (ORBs) and Enlisted Records Briefs (ERBs); electronic records that include individual education, training, and unit assignment history within a job title.

Embedded systems within the Civil Affairs community reinforced knowledge transfer and improved information dissemination as discussed by Jagasia et al. (2015). Respondents identified embedded systems as an integral feature shaping the organizational infrastructure for influencing workforce learning as discussed by Chan and Ngai (2012). Interviewees likewise supported concepts concerning technological platform systems and organizational learning effectiveness (Wong & Huang, 2011). Narratives also supported the importance that knowledge management, knowledge transfer, and explicit knowledge play in an organization, as examined by Mustapha (2012). Similar to the current research results, Arh et al. (2014) indicated the important effect technologically enhanced organizations had on organizational learning as described by several interview participants.

In discussing DTMS, P3 stated, “ideally we would use DTMS to track formal certifications, but mostly it is up to supervisors to track what subordinates are capable of.” This statement highlights the interaction between individual leaders and supporting technological platforms. P5’s response, “my organization really sacrifices the comfort of full manning to allow soldiers time for developmental opportunities like schools”, illustrates how leaders ensure individuals receive required training through tracking in systems like DTMS. This in turn collectively improves individual and team readiness,
subsequently contributing to organizational readiness. Many participants discussed the importance of embedded systems.

In discussing DTMS, P3 stated, “ideally we would use DTMS to track formal certifications, but mostly it is up to supervisors to track what subordinates are capable of.” This statement exemplifies the interaction between individual leaders and supporting technological platforms. P5’s response, “my organization really sacrifices the comfort of full manning to allow soldiers time for developmental opportunities like schools”, illustrates how leaders ensure individuals receive required training. This in turn collectively improves individual and team readiness, subsequently contributing to organizational readiness.

**Theme 6: Strategic Leadership.**

Interview participants described several leadership contributions to organizational learning. Using the traditional military chain of command, various forms of meetings, counselings, and recognizing achievements at the individual and group levels, can assist leadership in shaping learning. The chain of command and leaders at lower levels continuously influenced organizational learning through their respective contributions. From senior leadership levels, the organization had a dedicated weekly training day on the unit-training calendar. Subordinate leadership then executed section training and provided counseling, coaching, and mentoring to their teams to ensure soldiers could perform individual and collective tasks. Leaders also identified and tracked organizational gaps during meetings and by monitoring individual personnel progress. Leaders further shaped organizational learning by conducting AARs and incorporating lessons learned.
Respondents’ descriptions concerning unit leadership actions reflected Caldwell’s (2012) discussion of leadership theory shaping organizational learning. Through intervention, leadership affected individual motivation levels and learning. Participant descriptions about the AAR interaction process supported findings from Sathyapriya et al. (2012) concerning how new ideas contributed to organizational learning. The AAR process also allowed participants to brainstorm about desired outcomes while increasing flexibility amongst personnel as discussed by Haeffner et al. (2012). Interview responses further highlighted findings by Froechlich et al. (2014) that transformational and transactional leadership styles shape organizational skill development amongst employees.

Ten participants discussed how leadership influenced organizational learning through periodic meetings. Participants also revealed that leadership contributed to organizational learning through the incorporation of AARs and lessons learned. Some participants identified the chain of command as a contributor to organizational learning, as well as a mechanism for rewarding team and individual contributions. A few participants identified leaders’ individual and team counselings of subordinates as an influence on organizational learning.

P8 stated that leadership communicates and facilitates learning, “through communications to subordinate commanders/first sergeants. Weekly close-out formations with the battalion commander addressing soldiers directly.” These statements facilitated understanding of how participants perceived leadership’s contributions and role in organizational learning and information dissemination within the Civil Affairs community. P6 also stated that the “Command is great on getting the information to the lowest level. Most of the information is on the portal pages.” P6’s comment helped to
identify how leadership aids in organizational learning and participates in providing information to readers from an electronic support platform. Overall, nearly all participants highlighted leadership’s role in organizational learning.

_Theme 7: Systems Connection._

Participants described system connections to their garrison and operating environment through training events and leadership communications. Systems connection included daily email traffic to create awareness concerning issues, the use of electronic portals, unit websites, and shared drives. Participants also discussed the chain of command as an information conduit to gain situational awareness. Connection to the environment also included actions by organizational leadership posting unit related pictures depicting the Civil Affairs’ team organization, mission statement, and newspaper headings illustrating deployment operations. The steps above allowed individuals and teams to learn about their organization, their operating environment, and performance expectations and furthered unit understanding of the organization’s mission. Leaders also used organizational art to influence and shape organizational learning.

The Civil Affairs community consisted of other supporting army branches such as logisticians, finance officers, intelligence specialists, personnel specialists, communications personnel, and other support staff that facilitated daily support functions. Organizational leadership placed the brigade mission statement in strategic locations within the headquarters building, which informed both visitors and unit personnel of the unit purpose. The leadership also displayed art describing the basic Civil Affairs team structure alongside the mission statement for review and reading by passing personnel. The unit leadership also posted pictures and headings from previously published installation newspapers along the hallways to facilitate an expeditionary mentality. Art
displays contributed to both individual and team learning by visually teaching personnel about their current organization.

Participant descriptions concerning systems connection through technology reinforced findings concerning the positive influence of IT infrastructure on organizational learning (Abu-Shanab et al., 2014). Through a system network, the Civil Affairs leadership kept their personnel aware of the evolving environment through emails, OPORDS, and readily available information on unit websites and portals. Use of portals and websites also supported finding by Petiz et al. (2015) about information dissemination through such methods and the positive impacts on organizational learning. Participant responses also reinforced findings by Cocowitch et al. (2013) discussing leadership’s involvement in using internal assets to affect organizational learning.

Six participants identified e-mail communications as an alternate method to disseminate information throughout the Civil Affairs community. Ten participants discussed organizational intranet share drives and website portal pages as ways to provide individuals with readily available organizational information, which enabled organizational learning. The following statements by P9 and P21 illustrate connection mechanisms within the Civil Affairs community. P9 cited “Weekly FRAGOs/OPORDs (i.e., Fragmentary Order/Operations Order), and portal (i.e., unit website) on unit intranet,” as an example to of connection mechanism. Another view was provided by P21, who illustrated an example of a connection mechanism as information being “passed along during formations or e-mailed to leaders to inform the soldiers.”

Figure 1 depicts the Data Analysis in Qualitative Research procedure, which visually outlines the specific steps taken in gathering and interpreting the researcher’s
information for presentation in this dissertation. Subsequently, Figure 2 depicts the DLOQ-M theme questions utilized in the research study.

![Data Analysis Diagram](image)

*Figure 1. Data Analysis in Qualitative Research. Adapted from Diggs-Ofoe (2012, p. 83).*
Research Question | DLOQ-M Questions
--- | ---
**RQ1**: How does individual learning influence team and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community? | Q1 through Q9

**Theme 1**: Continuous Learning | **Theme 2**: Dialogue and Inquiry

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**RQ2**: How does team learning influence individual and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community? | Q10 through Q15

**Theme 3**: Team Learning | **Theme 4**: Empowerment

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**RQ3**: How does organizational learning influence individual and team learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community? | Q16 through Q22

**Theme 5**: Embedded Systems | **Theme 6**: Strategic Leadership | **Theme 7**: Systems Connection

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Findings

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*Figure 2*. Conceptual Link of Research Questions, Interview Questions, and Themes. Adapted from Diggs-Ofoe (2012, p. 54).
Summary

The purpose of the phenomenological study was to explore the perception of organizational land individual learning within a Civil Affairs community. Senge (1990) defines organizational learning as an integrating concept for a broad range of improvement tools and methods. Watkins and Marsick (1996) further describe it as captured through standard operating procedures, policies, culture, work processes, and networks virtually connecting teams to sustain organizational memory. Watkins and Marsick (1993) define individual learning as learning that is initially sporadic and faddish (unplanned). Individual learning is strategically tied to organizational needs, is developmental, and results in personal mastery.

Although a myriad of previous research investigated the link between organizational and individual learning, based on a review of types of organizational learning models developed by Senge (1990), Foley (2014) stated there was a lack of literature discussing organizational culture and how military organizations adapt. Thus, the researcher sought to reduce the knowledge gap identified by Foley. The current study consisted of 21 interview participants from a military Civil Affairs community. Interviewees had various levels of experience within the studied community.

The research findings illustrate how the Civil Affairs community exists as a learning organization within the larger U.S. Army. For RQ1, Theme 1, participants identified various continuous learning methods through their individual responses. The majority of respondents identified individual interaction with peers, subordinates, and leaders as a bridge to individual learning within a military Civil Affairs community. In Theme 2, individuals learned through the army’s traditional education system,
institutional information analysis formats (e.g., AARs), and the use of army doctrine and methodology.

For RQ2, Theme 3, respondents identified several ways in which teams specifically develop knowledge contributing to their organization. Responses included IPRs, team meetings, examining newly gained information, and the ability to revise group goals after discussions with the appropriate leadership. In Theme 4, respondents identified several methods addressing empowerment, including the AAR and MDMP process through which military personnel identified, researched, and selected appropriate courses of action for a given problem set.

For RQ3, Theme 5, respondents described several embedded systems (i.e., electronic platforms) contributing to the organizational learning process. These platforms ranged from daily email traffic for communications to electronic portals and unit websites, shared drives, electronic version trackers (e.g., Excel spreadsheets), DTMS, and ORBs/ERBs. In Theme 6, interview participants described various ways in which leadership at different levels influenced organizational learning and work assignment selection. Using the chain of command and meetings, recognizing achievements, and conducting individual and group level counselings shaped learning. In Theme 7, respondents again described the email process, OPORDs, availability of readily available electronic information, and leadership communications as methods of systems connections in an operational environment.

In Chapter 5, the researcher reports the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the qualitative phenomenological study. The researcher reviews and interprets data analyses, reports the findings, and discusses research process discoveries and implications for future research recommendations.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this non-experimental qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perception of organizational learning and individual learning within a military Civil Affairs community. Chapter 5 provides the reader with a comprehensive summary of the case study findings utilizing the seven dimensions of the learning organization (i.e., continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, embedded systems, system connection, empowerment, strategic leadership) developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996) through the 7DLOs. This case study helps fill the literature gaps identified by Foley (2014) who stated there was a lack of literature discussing organizational culture and how military organizations adapt. Foley based his findings on organizational learning models created by Senge (1990). The current research adds to the body of knowledge concerning learning organizations and military organizations.

To achieve the purpose of the current researcher’s case study, the author examined the experiences of 21 interview participants utilizing the 7DLOs framework. As part of the research process, the researcher used a qualitative phenomenological design to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs community. Through face-to-face and telephonic interviews, participants described their perceptions and experiences as members of the Civil Affairs community. This case study elicited participant responses concerning experiences with individual learning, team learning, and organizational learning. Chapter 5 provides conclusions, implications, and recommendations for implementation and future research.
Summary of the Study

Military organizations by nature are continuously learning and adapting to their environment based on what the United States Army calls AARs. AARs provide soldiers and units with feedback regarding mission and task performance (Department of the Army, 1993). The significance of this study is that it increases academic and military knowledge of military organizational learning in a garrison environment. The researcher also contributed to the limited academic literature addressing organizational learning theory and military organizations. Specifically, this research contribution increases knowledge of organizational learning within the army’s Civil Affairs community.

This case study added to the literature gaps between organizational learning theory and public sector (i.e., military units) organizations as identified by Foley (2014). The researcher used a qualitative phenomenological study that explored links between the Civil Affairs community and organizational learning. The work of Watkins and Marsick (1993) and Senge (1990) served as the theoretical framework for examining the Civil Affairs community as a learning organization. Haeffner et al. (2012) provided an excellent source for abbreviating the DLOQ instrument (Watkins & Marsick, 1993) to create the interview guide to examine the Civil Affairs community through the 7DLOs lens. Kellis and Ran (2013) proposed the public administration theory, which provided a promising theory that potentially applies to the Civil Affairs community and other military organizations. Froechlich et al. (2014) provided understanding concerning the role of management in creating learning organizations and contributed to understanding how senior non-commissioned officers and officers played a role in the learning process.

To add to the academic knowledge gaps between the field of organizational learning and studies associated with military organizations, the researcher conducted a
study comprised of 21 individuals from a military Civil Affairs community. The researcher incorporated concepts of organizational learning, as described by Senge (1990), with concepts traditionally provided by military historians to see if a military Civil Affairs community represented a learning organization. The researcher utilized a non-experimental qualitative phenomenological research method to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning contribute to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs community.

The qualitative research methodology appropriately addressed and reviewed experiences, including participant feelings concerning phenomenon as discussed by Creswell (2012). To understand how individual learning contributed to organizational learning within a military Civil Affairs community, the researcher utilized the NVIVO 11 program to help code and identify patterns from interview responses gathered through use of the 7DLOs. The purpose of the study was to explore the link between organizational learning and individual learning within a Civil Affairs community. The researcher sought to reduce the knowledge gap identified by Foley (2014) by adding to the body of knowledge concerning how organizational learning takes place in military organizations. The following problem statement served as the research starting point for the study: The problem is a lack of knowledge concerning how organizational learning, individual learning, and leadership within a military Civil Affairs community affect organizational culture and learning. Therefore, the study examined how concepts of organizational learning applied to the Civil Affairs community when discussing military (i.e., public sector) organizational learning. The following research questions guided this qualitative study:
RQ1: How does individual learning influence the perception of team and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community?

RQ2: How does team learning influence the perception of individual and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community?

RQ3: How does organizational learning influence the perception of individual and team learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community?

Through participant responses, the researcher was able to examine first-hand perceptions and experiences associated with the Civil Affairs community as a learning organization.

**Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

Participants indicated there is a learning environment within the Civil Affairs community during examination of their written responses. Results also reveal a reliance on IT systems to support information flow within the organization. This presents a strength and weakness. Section One of the interview guide sought to answer RQ1, Section Two sought to answer RQ2, Section Three sought to answer RQ3.

**Section One (RQ1).**

Section One sought to answer RQ1: How does individual learning influence the perception of team and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community? Responses to this question facilitate understanding concerning how an individual contributes to team and, subsequently, organizational learning from an aggregate perspective. Two of the 7DLOs themes emerged from this section.
Theme 1: Continuous Learning.

Findings and discussion. Participants described various methods of continuous learning through their individual responses. The majority of respondents identified individual interaction with peers, subordinates, and leaders as a bridge to individual learning within the Civil Affairs community. Weekly scheduled training on Thursdays during “Sergeant’s Time Training” facilitated a learning environment for individuals, teams, and organizational learning. Individual members participated in training events that allowed them to personally engage each other and transfer knowledge concerning best practices in their respective job fields.

Theme 2: Dialogue and Inquiry.

Findings and discussion. Participants described several army individual learning vehicles to improve personal understanding. Respondents repeatedly identified the AAR as a learning vehicle along with Civil Affairs related doctrine and formal military education (e.g., schools). Interviewees described how these settings helped reduce learning gaps and facilitated career progression. The AAR process further reinforced the importance of knowledge transfer between participants to improve mission readiness. Moreover, participants were encouraged to engage in higher education or certification programs to help improve their personal skill sets, which also contribute to mission readiness.

Section Two (RQ2).

Section Two sought to answer RQ2: How does team learning influence the perception of individual and organizational learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community? Two of the 7DLO themes emerged from this section.
Theme 3: Team Learning.

Findings and discussion. Interviewees’ answers to questions within this category identified several ways in which teams specifically develop knowledge contributing to their organization. Responses included the In-Process Review (IPR), team meetings, examining newly gained information, and the ability to revise group goals after discussions with the appropriate leadership. Additionally, several respondents felt they were treated equally when providing information within the constraints of a visible military rank structure. Views of equal treatment, and active participation in team events, facilitated a sense of belonging to the team and unit. Teams also identified required process changes during their team meetings and IPRs to help meet mission or unit goals. This allowed teams to actively shape their organization.

Theme 4: Empowerment.

Findings and discussion. Respondents described several methods addressing empowerment. The AAR mechanism facilitated team learning and empowerment within the Civil Affairs community. Another formal mechanism repeatedly mentioned by interviewees included the MDMP through which military personnel identify, research, and select appropriate courses of action for a given problem set. Individuals actively shaped their environment through discussions and dialogue during the AAR and MDMP processes, facilitating a sense of empowerment and contribution to the organization. Lessons learned and the implementation of recommendations further increased a sense of empowerment within the examined community as participants worked through problem solving scenarios.
Section Three (RQ3).

Section Three sought to answer RQ3: How does organizational learning influence the perception of individual and team learning (the seven dimensions of the learning organization) within a military Civil Affairs Community? Three of the 7DLO themes emerged from this section.

Theme 5: Embedded Systems.

Findings and discussion. Respondents described several embedded systems (i.e., electronic platforms) utilized as part of the organizational learning process. The platforms ranged from daily email traffic to create awareness concerning issues to the use of electronic portals and unit websites, share drives, and electronic version trackers (i.e., Excel spreadsheets). Responses also included larger army electronic systems such as the army’s Digital Training Management System (DTMS) that tracks an individual’s current training and education. Interviewees also identified individual ORBs and ERBs electronic records that include individual education, training, and unit assignment history within a job title. Systems like DTMS allowed leadership to view team improvement areas (e.g., gaps in training through individual training records) and shape future collective training for their respective teams.

Theme 6: Strategic Leadership.

Findings and discussion. Interview participants described various ways in which leadership at different levels influenced organizational learning and work assignment selection. Learning resulted through using the chain of command, meetings (including training meetings), recognizing achievements, and individual and group level counselings. The processes above allowed individuals and teams to learn about their organization, their operating environment, and performance expectations. Leadership
further shaped how individuals learned in the organization through a weekly designated training day on Thursdays. Leadership’s actions placed an importance on training and developing subordinate personnel throughout the organization. As a result, organizational leadership shaped unit readiness and deployability by maintaining a ready and deployable force.

**Theme 7: Systems Connection.**

Findings and discussion. Interview participants described system connections to their garrison and operating environment through training events and leadership communications (e.g., email traffic or official OPORDS). Systems connection included daily email traffic to create awareness concerning issues, the use of electronic portals, unit websites, and shared drives. Participants also discussed the chain of command as an information conduit to gain situational awareness. Connection to the environment also included organizational leadership posting unit related pictures depicting the Civil Affairs’ team organization, mission statement, and newspaper headings illustrating deployment operations. The processes above allowed individuals and teams to stay connected to their organization and their operating environment.

Findings.

The findings of this research confirmed the purpose statement to understand the Civil Affairs community is a learning organization, as discussed in Chapter 1. In addition to contributing to the body of knowledge concerning organizational learning in military organizations, study results provide relevant information concerning participants’ perceptions about their units as learning organizations. The researcher explored interviewee experiences to understand how a Civil Affairs community adapted to a changing environment.
Participant responses demonstrated that the Civil Affairs community had a learning culture reflective of the larger Army force. Additionally, participant responses reinforced the AAR as one of the learning mechanisms that affected and shaped learning within the 7DLOs embedded within the interview guide. For example, P11 stated, “in AAR, if one hears about similar project, that they had experiences with, they will share.” Furthermore, respondents demonstrated that the Civil Affairs community is an adaptive learning organization as described by Senge (1990) and Foley (2014).

As discussed by Darling and Parry (2001), the AAR was the primary mechanism through which learning occurred within the organization. AARs facilitated individual learning, team learning, and organizational learning. AARs provided learning points for developing performance measurements and helped units apply lessons learned to shape future operations. Additionally, the AARs facilitated the incorporation of individual knowledge into the collective whole as discussed by Tremaine and Seligman (2013). AAR participant comments examined in the study also reinforced Schiena et al.’s (2013) discussion on how leadership (e.g., transactional or transformational) contributed to creating a learning organization through the continuous evaluation of available versus newly gained information.

Institutional knowledge in the form of unit SOPs and organizational standards in executing tasks further complimented organizational learning as discussed by Walle (2014). P10 stated, “individuals produce Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or continuity books that maintain organizational knowledge or work tasks.” As individuals learned how to perform tasks or operations better, the organization modified or adapted unit SOPs to changing operating environments experienced by unit personnel. This contributed to the existing learning environment and fostered service member
engagement through empowerment and connection to the operating environment, as discussed by Bhaskar and Mishra (2014). The research findings further reinforced the link between employee engagement, learning, and successful organizational operations. For example, engagement leads to better learning and increases operational success. P5 stated, “in my experience, every member of our organization values each other’s unique experience in order to apply it to getting the job done. This particular unit maintains the most positive culture I’ve seen in the Army.” The findings also aligned with research by Tremaine and Seligman (2013), indicating that individual learning was the unit’s source of learning and intellectual muscle.

Social interaction amongst unit personnel across different ranks and positions allowed service members to engage in inter-organizational learning as discussed by Mozzato and Bitencourt (2014). P20 stated, “we are always encouraged to better ourselves both in and out of work. If we need extra time or help to do this, we are supported in a company basis.” In their responses, participants discussed interactions between personnel in both formal and informal settings. Collaboration contributed to soldiers learning how to become members of Civil Affairs community in both formal or informal settings, or members of a hierarchy as discussed by Mariotti (2012). Learning to become members of the Civil Affairs community was particularly true when examining responses between participating personnel from the battalion level and personnel from the next higher level at the brigade headquarters.

Similarly, information technology (IT) facilitated organizational learning and understanding by allowing unit personnel to have a readily accessible electronic knowledge bank. When asked about how the organization provides readily available information to unit personnel, P6 stated, “via the organization’s SharePoint site,” and P13
said, “by posting them on the brigade and battalion shared folders/drive.” This allowed personnel to log into organizational websites and share drives to update SOPs and related material, facilitating an effective Communities of Performance (CoP) as discussed by Jagasia et al. (2015). Likewise, research findings from the Civil Affairs community study reinforce Chan and Ngai’s (2012) findings related to electronic platforms facilitating higher rates of managerial support through responsive IT support. Through these knowledge sharing practices, IT contributed to positive organizational influences on learning as discussed by Abu-Shanab et al. (2014).

Organizational leadership across all levels shaped unit level learning through direct involvement and participation in AARs, meetings, and other forums discussed by interview participants. P20 stated, “Commanders, First Sergeants or Command Sergeant’s Major will address soldiers as a group.” While P5 said, “if something needs to go out, the first choice is a section sergeant meeting.” Leadership influenced operational effectiveness, individual, team, and organizational learning, as well as professional development as discussed by Froechlich et al. (2014). Leadership allowed innovation to take place in the workplace by developing personnel and modifying situations and how leaders executed operations (see Sathyapriya et al., 2012). Thus, the Civil Affairs community greatly resembles the makings of a public administration leadership theory framework proposed by Kellis and Ran (2013) where there was a correlation between transformational leadership and values-based leadership. That is, organizational values and vision shaped leadership’s role in administering the military Civil Affairs community as outlined by the organizational mission statement and participant responses.
Implications

The findings from the case study imply that the Civil Affairs community is a learning organization within the framework designed by the researcher. The results further indicate a better understanding concerning the research gap addressing differences in organizational learning theory and public sector organizations (Foley, 2014). This research implies that the public administration leadership theory (Kellis & Ran, 2013) is a viable framework for public sector organizations, including military organizations, which are rooted in ethical behavior that shape a positive organizational environment. Case study results further indicate that military organizations are learning organizations within a garrison environment, which is a new contribution to the academic and military literature. The study also contrasted to the current body of knowledge concerning deployed military organizations to various theaters discussed by previous academic case studies discussed in Chapter 2.

Theoretical implications

Theoretical implications concerning the case study indicate that the Civil Affairs community is a learning organization within the framework of this research. Interview participants answered the research questions previously discussed. The non-experimental qualitative phenomenological research design sought to understand how organizational learning, team learning, and individual learning contributed to organizational learning within the military Civil Affairs community. A strength associated with the case study is that it maintained the same research framework previously used by Watkins and Marsick (1993). A potential weakness of the current research effort is the introduction of the change in format of the interview guide from a quantitative instrument to a qualitative instrument. However, the examination of participant responses using the open-ended
interview guide provided richer context and greater understanding of organizational learning, which overcome the potential weakness.

**Practical implications**

Practical implications concerning the case study show that while the Civil Affairs community is a learning organization that continuously adapts to its evolving operational environment, there are areas for improvement. Interview participants demonstrated that they had an excellent grasp concerning individual learning, institutional knowledge, organizational learning, and operational understanding of their environment. Participant responses highlighted the importance and impact of IT platforms in influencing organizational learning. While the Civil Affairs community is good at learning and evolving along with the operating environment, it relies heavily on IT systems to further common understanding and shared learning. IT systems training could represent an area for developing future instruction plans that help develop better unit information management related to organizational performance measurements and outcomes. Improvement suggestions cited above would result in improved performance metric based decision making when developing annual training guidance, training events, and operations planning.

**Recommendations**

**Recommendations for future research**

The first recommendation for future research is to examine the impact of transitioning personnel on team and organizational learning within the government and military units. Transitioning personnel represent both the physical transfer of an individual in addition to the transfer of a portion of institutional knowledge from the larger organization. The effects resulting from an individual’s transfer could help
understand if the organization has good transition mechanisms in place. These include having deskside and departmental SOPs in place to successfully integrate new personnel. The study of transition mechanisms would also help to identify and reduce the impact of transitioning personnel.

The second recommendation for future research is to examine the relationship between effective operations execution and leadership involvement. The case study results leaders fostered innovation within a military organization traditionally considered constrained by pre-established unit procedures and regulations. Understanding how other military organizations innovate in the workplace and improve organizational learning represents a knowledge gap. This presents a potential improvement area to help improve communications for designing training and implementing improved cost controls while designing operations. This subsequently reduces costs while executing real-time missions.

The third recommendation for future research is to examine the relationship between career development and systems connection. This recommendation represents an area where future researchers could understand better the link between successful individuals and their ability to execute operations or missions. The current case study did not examine the role of key positions or leaders who facilitated individual understanding. Nor did it examine leaders’ roles in knowing or developing performance measurements as part of their job description. Future researchers could define and examine metrics to capture pertinent milestones in an individual’s career progression, with specific focus on leaders with knowledge of performance measurement.

The fourth recommendation for future research is to administer the 7DLO framework to other government and military organizations to examine if the Civil Affairs
community is reflective of the larger military and government culture. The research results indicate that the examined community was good at learning and adapting. This case study did not review or study other dynamics or potential interest areas outside of the current framework even though participant responses raised issues important to other research disciplines. Future research should expand into other types of organizations and disciplines.

Next steps in furthering the above recommendations would be to use the 7DLOs to identify any special findings within future researcher’s population interests. Scholars could simply utilize the research instrument to focus on organizational performance and outcomes measurements. This would allow the researcher to understand if personnel in other government entities share the same reliance on IT for organizational performance and outcomes. Results from this research would further expand knowledge concerning how these kinds of organizations learn and how effective they are in managing resources (e.g., personnel, material, time, financial, etc.).

**Recommendations for practice**

The first recommendation for practice relates to training unit personnel on expected use of IT systems and information management practices to help shape operations. A professional development session for all unit personnel addressing how the Civil Affairs community defines and measures operational performance would greatly enhance organizational understanding. This would allow individuals within the community to learn how leadership addresses the development of performance metrics. This would also aid future leaders in preparing for positions of increasing responsibility as they develop their operational planning and execution skills. Beneficiaries from
incorporating this practice are the individuals within the organization, the army, and the taxpayer.

The second recommendation for practice relates to using the for AAR process to integrate financial performance outcomes. Additionally, a professional development session for all unit personnel addressing how the Civil Affairs community defines and measures financial performance outcomes within the organization would greatly enhance understanding in selecting appropriate activities that maximize training and financial value. Given an increasingly financially constrained fiscal environment, getting the greatest value for every government dollar spent is important in supporting operations. This would allow individual personnel within the organization to help develop operations that maximize efficient use of resources (i.e., physical and financial resources). Beneficiaries from incorporating this practice are the individuals within the organization, the army, and the taxpayer.

The third recommendation for future practice to both military and non-military public sector organizations is to use the 7DLO framework to understand and identify organizational learning gaps. This allows organizational leadership to use a proven framework that facilitates a better understanding of potential weaknesses and areas for shaping future training plans and programs. However, to help protect both the workforce and leadership from potential retaliation concerns, it is recommended that the interview guide be administered by non-interested parties such as members of the Inspector General’s (IG) Office, Equal Opportunity (EO) Office, or similar offices of non-military organizations. Implementation of these instruments also allows the Civil Affairs community and other military and non-military organizations to introduce an objective instrument that helps in measuring the current organizational learning environment.
Beneficiaries from incorporating this practice are the individuals within the organization, the army, and the taxpayer.

Concluding Remarks

To explore the link between organizational learning and individual learning within a military Civil Affairs community, the researcher conducted a non-experimental qualitative phenomenological study. The case study results indicate that the Civil Affairs community is a learning organization according to the metrics embedded in the interview guide. Results from the case study increased academic understanding in addressing the literature gap discussed by Foley (2014). This case study added to the literature by providing an understanding of how a Civil Affairs community learns in a garrison environment. Interview responses constantly highlighted the AAR process as one of the key learning mechanisms that contributed to individual, team, and organizational learning. Participant responses also highlighted organizational reliance on and impact of IT systems for information flow. This presents opportunities for future research while adding to the current body of knowledge regarding organizational learning and military (i.e., public sector) organizations. Specifically, future research should examine how other military organizations use IT systems to develop and measure financial and knowledge performance metrics. As a microcosm of the larger U.S. Army, the Civil Affairs community serves as a reflection of a larger military culture that is potentially further reflective of the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense.
References


Appendix A

Instrument Use Authorization

-----Original Message-----
From: JACNEILI@aol.com [mailto:JACNEILI@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 10:58 AM
To: Cardenas, Jose G MAJ US ARMY 85 CA BDE (US)
Cc: kwatkins@uga.edu, marsick@tc.columbia.edu
Subject: Re: Doctoral Student Request Use of DLOQ Instrument for Doctoral Research (UN...)

Dear Mr. Cardenas,

We allow students to use the DLOQ without charge for their research. I’m attaching a copy of the instrument and appropriate copyright information. We’d be interested in the results of your work for our records. Best wishes in your studies.

Sincerely,

Dr. Judy O'Neill
Partners for Learning and Leadership
22 Surf Ave
Warwick, RI 02889-6121
401-737-9997

In a message dated 3/24/2015 4:26:09 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, jose.g.cardenas.mil@mail.mil writes:

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Hello,
I am currently a Doctoral student at Columbia Southern University working on my dissertation and request permission to use your DLOQ instrument to help identify potential correlations between individual learning and organizational learning. I am also trying to find out how I can get a copy of the instrument for use in my research, and any associated price if any. I have found numerous articles that reference your instrument, but not a single copy of the instrument itself. If you can provide an additional information it would be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your time.

Jose G. Cardenas, M.A., MBA
Cell: 560-659-1691
jose.g.cardenas.mil@mail.mil

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE
Appendix B

Legal Review

Karchaske, Matthew N CPT USARMY III CORPS (US)
Tel: Bates, Joshua J CPT USARMY III CORPS (US); Cardenas, Jose G MAJ USARMY 85 CA BDE (US)
Cct: Henderson, Danielle M SPC USARMY (US)

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 9:42 AM

This type of message isn't fully supported in Conversation mode. Click here to open the full version, which may show you more details or features.
You forwarded this message on 4/23/2015 12:46 PM.

MAJ Cardenas,

There is no legal objection to your request to interview Soldiers pursuant to educational degree requirements.

CPT Bates' advice is sound: as long as participation is voluntary, and the surveys are conducted outside of the duty-day, and no PIll is collected (anonymous surveys are preferred), you should be just fine.

I assume your institution requires their own ethical review before authorizing research on human subjects. If not, I could review your questions and discuss any other concerns you might have before starting.

Vfr;

Matthew N. Karchaske
Captain, JA
Administrative Law Attorney
III Corps and Fort Hood
(o) 254.553.1185
(c) 512.986.7319
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Appendix C

Unit Research Authorization

85th CA Doctoral Research Legal Review (UNCLASSIFIED)

Mauser, David P COL USARMCY 85 CA BDE (US)
To: Cardenas, Jose G MAJ USARMCY 85 CA BDE (US)
Cc: Nunziale, Gerald A Jr MAJ USARMCY 85 CA BDE (US)

Tuesday, May 22, 2013 1:49 PM

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Jose,

Thanks for the legal review. Please proceed with the research phase.

“Warrior Diplomats”

COL David P. Mauser
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Appendix D

DLOQ-M

Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire

Learning Organization Action Imperatives

Global
- Provide strategic leadership for learning
- Connect the organization to its environment

Organization
- Empower people toward a collective vision
- Create systems to capture and share learning

Teams
- Encourage collaboration and team learning

Individuals
- Promote inquiry and dialogue
- Create continuous learning opportunities

Toward Continuous Learning and Transformation

Developed by
Karen E. Watkins and Victoria J. Marsick
DIMENSIONS OF THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Developed by Karen E. Watkins and Victoria J. Marsick
Modified by Jose G. Cardenas for military use

A learning organization is one that learns continuously and transforms itself. . . . Learning is a continuous, strategically used process — integrated with and running parallel to work.

In the last decade, organizations have experienced wave after wave of rapid transformation as global markets and external political and economic changes make it impossible for any business or service—whether private, public, or nonprofit—to cling to past ways of doing work. A learning organization arises from the total change strategies that institutions of all types are using to help navigate these challenges. Learning organizations proactively use learning in an integrated way to support and catalyze growth for individual workers, teams and other groups, entire organizations, and (at times) the institutions and communities with which they are linked.

In this questionnaire, you are asked to think about how your organization supports and uses learning at an individual, team, and organizational level. From this data, you and your organization will be able to identify the strengths you can continue to build upon and the areas of greatest strategic leverage for development toward becoming a learning organization.

Please respond to each of the following items. For each item, describe the degree to which this is something that is or is not true of your organization. If the item refers to a practice, which rarely or never occurs, please provide a sentence describing why you believe this to be so. Fill in your response by writing a short sentence or two on the answer sheet provided.

Example: In this example, if you believe that leaders often look for opportunities to learn, describe how by providing a short answer on the answer sheet provided.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your perception of where things are at this time.
Please return your completed answer sheet in the envelope provided.

Thank you for completing this survey.

© 1997 Karen E. Watkins & Victoria J. Marsick. All rights reserved. The authors wish to thank Baiyin Yang, Tom Valentine, and Judy O’Neil for their assistance in validating this questionnaire. This questionnaire is based on books by Karen Watkins and Victoria Marsick: Sculpting the Learning Organization, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1993; and In Action: Creating the Learning Organization, Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, 1996.
Individual Level

1. How do Soldiers in the command (or organization) openly discuss mistakes in order to learn from them?
2. How do Soldiers identify the skills they need for future work tasks?
3. How do Soldiers in the command (or organization) help each other learn?
4. How do Soldiers in the organization get money and other resources to support their learning?
5. How does the command (or organization) give Soldiers time to support learning?
6. How do Soldiers view problems in their work as an opportunity to learn?
7. How do Soldiers in the command (or organization) give open and honest feedback to each other?
8. How are Soldiers in the command (or organization) encouraged to ask "why" regardless of rank?
9. How do Soldiers in the organization spend time building trust with each other?

Team or Group Level

10. How do teams/groups in the organization get the freedom to adapt their goals as needed?
11. How do you feel that in the command (or organization), teams/groups treat members as equals, regardless of rank, culture, or other differences?
12. How do you feel that in the command (or organization), teams/groups focus both on the group's task and on how well the group is working?
13. How do teams/groups in my command (or organization) revise their thinking because of group discussions or information collected?
14. How are teams/groups in my organization rewarded for their achievements as a team/group?
15. How confident do you feel that in the command (or organization), teams/groups are confident that the organization will act on their recommendations?

Organization Level

16. How does the command (or organization) use two-way communication on a regular basis (such as suggestion systems, electronic bulletin boards, or town hall/open meetings)?
17. How does the command (or organization) enable Soldiers to get needed information at any time quickly and easily?
18. How does the command (or organization) maintain an up-to-date database of Soldier skills?
19. How does the command (or organization) create systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance?
20. How does the command (or organization) make its lessons learned available to all Soldiers?

21. How do you feel that the command (or organization) recognizes Soldiers for taking initiative?

22. How does the command (or organization) give Soldiers choices in their work assignments?

**Measuring Performance at the Organizational Level**

23. How does the command (or organization) use funds more effectively than last year?

24. How is average productivity per Soldier in the command (or organization) greater than last year?

25. How do you know that the command (or organization), identification to implementation for lessons learned is less than last year, if so how?

26. How does the command (or organization) reduce the cost per business transaction from last year?

27. How do you feel that the command (or organization) did in implementing suggestions this year as opposed to last year?

28. How does the percentage of total spending devoted to technology and information processing in your command (or organization) compare to last year?

29. How do you know your organization increased the number of individuals learning skills from last year?
Appendix E

Original DLOQ by Watkins and Marsick

Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire

Learning Organization Action Imperatives

Global
- Provide strategic leadership for learning
- Connect the organization to its environment

Empower people toward a collective vision

Organization
- Create systems to capture and share learning

Encourage collaboration and team learning

Teams

Individuals
- Promote inquiry and dialogue
- Create continuous learning opportunities

Toward Continuous Learning and Transformation

Developed by
Karen E. Watkins and Victoria J. Marsick
DIMENSIONS OF THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Developed by Karen E. Watkins and Victoria J. Marsick

A learning organization is one that learns continuously and transforms itself . . . . Learning is a continuous, strategically used process — integrated with and running parallel to work.

In the last decade, organizations have experienced wave after wave of rapid transformation as global markets and external political and economic changes make it impossible for any business or service—whether private, public, or nonprofit—to cling to past ways of doing work. A learning organization arises from the total change strategies that institutions of all types are using to help navigate these challenges. Learning organizations proactively use learning in an integrated way to support and catalyze growth for individual workers, teams and other groups, entire organizations, and (at times) the institutions and communities with which they are linked.

In this questionnaire, you are asked to think about how your organization supports and uses learning at an individual, team, and organizational level. From this data, you and your organization will be able to identify the strengths you can continue to build upon and the areas of greatest strategic leverage for development toward becoming a learning organization.

Please respond to each of the following items. For each item, determine the degree to which this is something that is or is not true of your organization. If the item refers to a practice which rarely or never occurs, score it a one [1]. If it is almost always true of your department or work group, score the item a six [6]. Fill in your response by marking the appropriate number on the answer sheet provided.

Example: In this example, if you believe that leaders often look for opportunities to learn, you might score this as a four [4] by filling in the 4 on the answer sheet provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Always</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my organization, leaders continually look for opportunities to learn.</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your perception of where things are at this time.

© 1997 Karen E. Watkins & Victoria J. Marsick. All rights reserved. The authors wish to thank Baiyin Yang, Tom Valentine, and Judy O’Neil for their assistance in validating this questionnaire. This questionnaire is based on books by Karen Watkins and Victoria Marsick: Sculpting the Learning Organization, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1993; and In Action: Creating the Learning Organization, Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, 1996.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>Almost Always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In my organization, people openly discuss mistakes in order to learn from them.</td>
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<td>2. In my organization, people identify skills they need for future work tasks.</td>
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<td>3. In my organization, people help each other learn.</td>
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<td>4. In my organization, people can get money and other resources to support their learning.</td>
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<td>5. In my organization, people are given time to support learning.</td>
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<td>6. In my organization, people view problems in their work as an opportunity to learn.</td>
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<td>7. In my organization, people are rewarded for learning.</td>
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<td>8. In my organization, people give open and honest feedback to each other.</td>
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<td>9. In my organization, people listen to others' views before speaking.</td>
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<td>10. In my organization, people are encouraged to ask &quot;why&quot; regardless of rank.</td>
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<td>11. In my organization, whenever people state their view, they also ask what others think.</td>
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<td>12. In my organization, people treat each other with respect.</td>
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<td>13. In my organization, people spend time building trust with each other.</td>
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<td><strong>Team or Group Level</strong></td>
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<td>14. In my organization, teams/groups have the freedom to adapt their goals as needed.</td>
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<td>15. In my organization, teams/groups treat members as equals, regardless of rank, culture, or other differences.</td>
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<td>16. In my organization, teams/groups focus both on the group's task and on how well the group is working.</td>
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<td>17. In my organization, teams/groups revise their thinking as a result of group discussions or information collected.</td>
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<td>18. In my organization, teams/groups are rewarded for their achievements as a team/group.</td>
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<td>19. In my organization, teams/groups are confident that the organization will act on their recommendations.</td>
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<td><strong>Organization Level</strong></td>
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<td>20. My organization uses two-way communication on a regular basis, such as suggestion systems, electronic bulletin boards, or town hall/open meetings.</td>
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<td>21. My organization enables people to get needed information at any time quickly and easily.</td>
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<td>22. My organization maintains an up-to-date data base of employee skills.</td>
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<td>23. My organization creates systems to measure gaps between current and expected performance.</td>
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<td>24. My organization makes its lessons learned available to all employees.</td>
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<td>25. My organization measures the results of the time and resources spent on training.</td>
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</table>
27. My organization gives people choices in their work assignments.

28. My organization invites people to contribute to the organization's vision.

[Turn the page and continue to answer the questions on the next page.]
29. My organization gives people control over the resources they need to accomplish their work.
30. My organization supports employees who take calculated risks.
31. My organization builds alignment of visions across different levels and work groups.
32. My organization helps employees balance work and family.
33. My organization encourages people to think from a global perspective.
34. My organization encourages everyone to bring the customers' views into the decision-making process.
35. My organization considers the impact of decisions on employee morale.
36. My organization works together with the outside community to meet mutual needs.
37. My organization encourages people to get answers from across the organization when solving problems.
38. In my organization, leaders generally support requests for learning opportunities and training.
39. In my organization, leaders share up to date information with employees about competitors, industry trends, and organizational directions.
40. In my organization, leaders empower others to help carry out the organization's vision.
41. In my organization, leaders mentor and coach those they lead.
42. In my organization, leaders continually look for opportunities to learn.
43. In my organization, leaders ensure that the organization's actions are consistent with its values.

We use the metaphor of sculpting to describe what organizations must do to become learning organizations. Michelangelo spoke of sculpting as chipping away that which does not belong to the essence within the material that is sculpted:

The best artist has no concept which some single marble does not enclose within its mass, but only the hand which obeys the intelligence can accomplish that. . . . Taking away . . . brings out a living figure in alpine and hard stone, which . . . grows the more as the stone is chipped away . . . (Michelangelo, quoted in LaCour, 1963).
The sculptor of the learning organization has to see in her mind’s eye, and shape structures toward, that which nurtures learning and then create, sustain, or alter existing approaches to foster this capacity. She will chip away at all of the existing systems, attitudes, and practices which thwart learning. (Victoria Marsick and Karen Watkins)

Measuring Performance at the Organizational Level

In this section, we ask you to reflect on the relative performance of the organization. You will be asked to rate the extent to which each statement is accurate about the organization’s current performance when compared to the previous year. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your perception of current performance. For example, if the organization has performed much better than last year, fill in a [6] on the answer sheet provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3 4 5 6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

44. In my organization, return on investment is greater than last year
45. In my organization, average productivity per employee is greater than last year.
46. In my organization, time to market for products and services is less than last year.
47. In my organization, response time for customer complaints is better than last year.
48. In my organization, market share is greater than last year.
49. In my organization, the cost per business transaction is less than last year
50. In my organization, customer satisfaction is greater than last year.
51. In my organization, the number of suggestions implemented is greater than last year.
52. In my organization, the number of new products or services is greater than last year.
53. In my organization, the percentage of skilled workers compared to the total workforce is greater than last year.
54. In my organization, the percentage of total spending devoted to technology and information processing is greater than last year.
55. In my organization, the number of individuals learning new skills is greater than last year.

[Turn the page and continue to answer the questions on the next page.]
Additional Information about You and Your Organization

In this section, fill in the number on the answer sheet which corresponds to the answer which best describes you or your organization. Please mark your response accurately.

56. What is your role?
   1. Senior Management
   2. Middle Management
   3. Supervisory
   4. Non-Management Technical/Professional
   5. Non-Management [Hourly Employee]

57. What is your educational experience?
   1. did not complete high school
   2. high school graduate
   3. certificate or associates degree
   4. undergraduate degree
   5. graduate degree

58. How many employees are in your organization?
   1. 0 - 500
   2. 501-1,000
   3. 1,001-10,000
   4. 10,001-50,000
   5. over 50,000

59. Type of business?
   1. Manufacturing
   2. Service
   3. Government
   4. Other

60. Your organization’s annual revenue?
   1. under $2 million
   2. $2-25 million
   3. $26-99 million
   4. over $100 million
Partners for the Learning Organization

Partners for the Learning Organization is an organization founded to work with individuals and organizations to design and implement strategic learning organization initiatives. Through their work and research with leading edge companies, the Partners have seen numerous paths which organizations may take to become a learning organization. This questionnaire reflects their accumulated wisdom and is designed to be used as a benchmark against which an organization may measure itself over time to determine whether or not its learning organization efforts are effective. The questionnaire diagnoses how well positioned the organization is now to become a learning organization and serves as a stimulus to guide strategic planning toward becoming a learning organization.

The Partners provide ongoing consultation to help organizations implement the seven action imperatives reflected in this instrument. They help organizations diagnose current learning organization readiness, develop a strategic plan, conduct training and workshops with organizational members to build awareness of the learning organization initiative, work with organizations and teams to build dialogue, reflection, and action learning processes, and provide coaching and consultation to support learning organization initiatives.

The Partners

Victoria Marsick, Ph.D. Marsick has worked with executives and HR professionals in numerous industries both in the U.S. and abroad. She is on the faculty of Teacher’s College of Columbia University and with the Huber Institute. She consults in the areas of learning organizations, action learning, and leadership development.

Judy O’Neil, Ed.D. O’Neil has worked as a learning organization practitioner in a major international telecommunications corporation. She has directed an international network of learning organization facilitators, and currently partners with individuals in U.S. and international companies, primarily using action learning, on their journey to becoming learning organizations.

Karen Watkins, Ph.D. Watkins partners with executives and HR professionals in the U.S. and abroad in her continued efforts to create and to study learning organizations. She
consults in the areas of learning organizations, action learning and action science, and organization development. She is a member of the faculty of the University of Georgia.