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Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania.
Advisor: Ana Reyes

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Program Management Through the Lens of a Massive Multiplayer Online Gamer: A Pilot Study

Abstract

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Keywords

World of Warcraft, program management, leadership, competencies, competency models, transference of skills

Comments

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A MASSIVE MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAMER:
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by

Casey L. Sofchak-Scott

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University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2012

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A MASSIVE MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAMER:
A PILOT STUDY

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Learning can occur through many media types. This thesis explores the possibility that guild leaders in the Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO) video game *World of Warcraft* learn and use similar skills to those that professional program managers learn and use in the corporate world. I evaluate *World of Warcraft* literature, present guild member interviews and use online forums to compare gaming leadership attributes to attributes in the program manager competency model described by Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005). The results provide preliminary support for the hypothesis that a bridge exists between these two leadership roles.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is extended to Dr. Ana Reyes, my capstone course advisor, as well as to Dr. Larry Starr and Dr. Richard Heaslip, my capstone readers, for their interest and guidance with the topic. I thank the following people for their support, advice and encouragement throughout my short but enjoyable time in the Organizational Dynamics program: Dr. Martin Stankard, Dr. Richard Bayney, Dr. Joel Adler, Dr. Elijah Anderson and Dr. Jean-Marc Choukroun. I also want to thank the wonderful people in the *World of Warcraft* community and at ‘Supply Company’ who let me interview/shadow them for research purposes. I wholeheartedly extend appreciation to my diligent and persistent peer reviewers, Stefanie A. Kyak and Kurt W. Richardson. Last but not least, I want to share that I am very blessed to have a very patient and supportive husband, Michael R. Scott, Jr. as my personal soundboard, confidante, and proofreader throughout my journey at UPenn.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
1	Breakdown of Artto, et. al's (2009) Top Ten Rankings	10
2	Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) Data Table	17
3	Excerpt from Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) Competency Model – Self and Work	21
4	Levin and Ward (2011): Differences between Project and Program Management	22
5	Visual Compilation of <i>WoW</i> and Expansion Basics	29
6	A Basic Breakdown of a Typical Guild Hierarchy and Roles	30
7	Subcomponents Revealed as Motivating Factors in Video Games (Yee, 2006)	34
8	Similarities for Satisfaction and Motivation	41
9	Comparison of Guild Roles to P3 Roles	42
10	Blizzard Entertainment versus Project Management Institute, Inc (2008) Applied Governance Examples	43
11	Creswell and Miller's (2000) Data Validation Examples	54
12	Interview List	55
13	Example of Interview Mapping Process	57
14	Data Samples Gathered From <i>WoW</i> Guild Interviews	58
15	A Chart of the Artifact Review Process	59
16	Excel Spreadsheet of Forum Review for One Topic	60

17	Partial Mapping of Skooney’s Interview to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young’s (2005) Model	62
18	Maturity Level Comparison	63
19	Granularity of Focus	66
20	Relationship with Team	69
21	Approach to Conflict and Divergence	71
22	Expectations of Others	74
23	Approach to Risk	76
24	Approach to Face to Face Communications	79
25	Emotional Attachment	82
26	Disposition for Action	85
27	Approach to Role Plurality	87
28	Education and Support	89
29	Adaptive Intent	91
30	Attitude to Scope	94
31	Attitude to Time	96
32	List of Guild Leaders	98
33	Use of Questions	100
34	Awareness of Organizational Capabilities	101
35	Approach to Governance	103
36	Attitude to Funding	105
37	Guild Leader Maturity Level and Guild Progression Evaluation	108

38	Recent Job Posting for Program Manager from Monster.com	111
39	Attitude to Funding Comparison Overview	112
40	<i>WoW</i> Examples Mapped to the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) Competency Model	113
41	<i>WoW</i> Interview Results Mapped to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) Model	115

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1 Pre-Program Preparation from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)	11
2 Program Initiation from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)	12
3 Program Set-up from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)	12
4 Delivery of Benefits from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)	13
5 Program Closure or Transition to Operations from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)	14
6 A Visual Model of Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) Themes and Attributes List	19
7 Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) Maturity Levels	20
8 Project and Program Management Competencies Combined	23
9 <i>Modern Warfare 3</i> Image Provided by IGNentertainment	25
10 <i>StarCraft II</i> Image Provided by IGNentertainment	26
11 <i>SkyRim</i> Image Provided by IGNentertainment	27
12 <i>WoW</i> Image Provided by IGNentertainment	27
13 A Basic <i>WoW</i> Raid	32
14 Guild Achievements	35
15 <i>WoW</i> Leadership Forums	99
16 Virtutis' <i>Mists of Pandaria</i> Website	105

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER	
1 Introduction	1
The Epiphany	
Potential Implications for the Professional Program Management Community	
Structure of Thesis	
2 Literature Review	9
Program Management	
History and Context	
Program Management Competency Models and Theories	
<i>WoW</i> Literature Review	
Overview of Computer Games	
<i>WoW</i> History and Guild Dynamics	
Dynamics of Game Play	
Summary of <i>WoW</i> Guilds	
Similarities between <i>WoW</i> and Program Management	
Leadership in <i>WoW</i>	
3 Methodology	49
The Data Identification Journey	
Research Limitations	
Comparative Literature Analysis of Leadership Scenarios	
Subject and Methods for Interview Analysis	
Artifact Analysis	
The Research Steps	
Guild Leader Advice Evaluation	

4	Results and Interpretations	66
	Comparative Literature Analysis of Leadership Scenarios	
	Interview Analysis	
	Artifact Analysis	
	Guild Leader Advice Evaluation	
5	Discussion and Conclusion	109
	Summary	
	An Additional Research Finding	
	Limitations	
	Future Research	
	Conclusion	
	REFERENCES	120
	APPENDIX	127
	A DEFINITIONS	
	B PARTINGTON, PELLEGRINELLI, AND YOUNG (2005) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT ATTRIBUTES AND MATURITIES	
	C INTRODUCTIONS TO INTERVIEWEES	
	D INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR <i>WORLD OF WARCRAFT</i> RAID LEADERS	
	E INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR <i>WORLD OF WARCRAFT</i> GUILD LEADERS	
	F INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR <i>WORLD OF WARCRAFT</i> SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS	
	G ATTRIBUTE COMPARISON	

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Epiphany

In 2007, a Marine sergeant gave me an unexpected compliment when he said, “The hardest part of playing this game with you is not making sure I follow orders or play to be successful; rather, the most difficult part is not being able to personally shake your hand for a job well done.” I was a guild leader in a massive multiplayer online (MMO) role-playing game and this Marine sergeant, whom I had not met in person, was a player under my leadership. The overall experience of leading in the online gaming environment was the prelude to what would become a personal journey to understand the layers of leadership and their specific skill requirements for success in the virtual gaming environment.

A brief introduction to the virtual side of this thesis is necessary here. *World of Warcraft* (WoW) is a virtual gaming environment in which players enter a fantasy world with the general intention of socializing and reaching game-based objectives. Guilds are formed with the purpose of structuring a framework around these intentions. The dynamics of guild organization require leaders who are capable of recruiting players with like-minded interests, creating a guild vision and goals, and establishing rules for accomplishing those goals. The vision and goals can take on many forms, but typically follow one of three structures: a social guild, a guild for completing objectives against other players (Player versus Player), or a guild for completing objectives against scripted game encounters (Player versus Environment). These three structures are not mutually exclusive, but can take on that dynamic depending on the vision and goals of the guild.

Many gaming terms will be introduced and used throughout this document. While some terms are briefly explained in this paper to provide contextual meaning for the reader, additional definitions and greater details for other terms are presented in Appendix A.

When I joined *WoW*, my initial impression was that a guild was a place for socializing. As I played, I came to realize that guilds are a necessary game element if I wanted to accomplish what many players consider the most exciting objectives in the game – the Player versus Environment (PvE) content. While I was able to find guilds that had the same vision and goals that I had, I had trouble finding a guild leader who could create rules for engagement that I wanted to follow. Therefore, I created my own guild with the intent of building what I considered the set of rules for success. The guild dynamics I faced were formidable and included new objectives and changes to game mechanics on a routine basis to remain successful.

Guilds are defined as “named groups that socialize and play together” (Nardi & Harris, 2006, p. 2) and typically exist to provide people in the game with repetitive means to conquer PvE raids. These raids are scripted encounters against the game that are created by the game makers for a grouping of between 5-40 players (Nardi & Harris, 2006).

Nardi and Harris (2006) describe the basics of a typical guild as follows:

Players can belong to only one guild. There may be no specific goal for a guild other than for players to have a group to identify with. Or guilds may be highly organized and goal-driven (especially at higher levels). There is a guild chat channel and hierarchical ranks within the guild. Middle-level ranks can invite new members. This is a trusted responsibility because allowing the wrong people into a guild can ruin its social dynamics. The highest ranks can remove members, post messages that guild members see when they log in, and promote members to higher ranks. Guilds often organize guild-only raids and guildmates often group together. Much of the sociable non-game-related chat takes place in the guild channel.

My guild leadership in *WoW* started with a guild’s fledgling structure of 10 members. I had the daunting task of recruiting a core group of players that I thought would be loyal,

responsible and dedicated both to me and to the game. That was my framework for ensuring that my PvE guild would be sustainable long-term; this sustainability is part of what defines success in the MMORPG video game realm. When building my guild, I created a hierarchy of ranks, and roles within these ranks, to provide order to my established ecosystem. Roles included promoting players adept at recruiting, others who could research strategy, and still more people who could resolve basic conflicts and negotiation – because doing all those tasks alone would be cumbersome and all the tasks were necessary for success (Golub, 2010; Wankel, 2010).

Once recruitment was complete, the next step I took was to create a systematic process for meeting the objectives of the guild majority. I worked side by side with my newly appointed raid leader to evaluate what team encounters the guild was prepared to face each week. As the guild grew in both experience and size, the accomplishments became more difficult to plan and complete due to added complexity introduced by the game makers (Golub, 2010). I also understood that to remain sustainable, I had to ensure that everyone on the team felt as though he or she were rewarded intermittently for his or her time and effort, especially in light of the skills each person provided to the guild. As a result of all this effort, my guild eventually sustained a membership of over 75 online paying players, who played *WoW* under my guidance and direction for two years – and I soon began receiving compliments like the one from the Marine sergeant introduced earlier.

My experience as a respected leader in a video game is not unique. There is an existing literature on leadership success in virtual games, on how skills developed by playing virtual games can transfer into the real world, and on how virtual games can teach people skills. For example, Reeves, Malone, and O’Driscoll (2008) found that:

The organizational and strategic challenges facing players who serve as game leaders are familiar ones: recruiting, assessing, motivating, rewarding, and retaining talented and

culturally diverse team members; identifying and capitalizing on the organization's competitive advantage; analyzing multiple streams of constantly changing and often incomplete data in order to make quick decisions that have wide-ranging and sometimes long-lasting effects. But these management challenges are heightened in online games because an organization must be built and sustained with a volunteer workforce in a fluid and digitally mediated environment (p. 1).

In my personal evaluation of leadership in the virtual games, I focused on ideal skill requirements based on my personal experiences. Years later as a graduate student in Organizational Dynamics, I made an informal connection between these skills I gathered and some of the attributes necessary for program management effectiveness in organizations. The skills seemed so similar that I was able to relate personal guild leader experiences to almost every program management topic taught throughout the course of my organizational studies.

I began my studies in program management in January, 2012 in the MS degree program in Organizational Dynamics concentration, Projects, Programs, and Portfolios (P3). I initially interpreted Richard Heaslip's program management introductory class, DYNM624: Program Management Skills and Systems, as new conceptual material outside of my personal experience, especially based on the Project Management Institute's definition of program management (Project Management Institute, Inc, 2008b):

Program management is the centralized coordinated management of a program to achieve the program's strategic objectives and benefits. It involves aligning multiple projects to achieve the program goals and allows for optimized or integrated cost, schedule, and effort.... Through structured governance, program management enables appropriate planning, scheduling, executing, monitoring, and controlling across the projects within the program to achieve program benefits (p. 6).

Then one particular paper caught my attention in that class that seemed to link leadership in gaming to the education that I was receiving.

Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) paper, "Attributes and levels of program management competency: an interpretive study" described specific "attributes and levels of

program management competence” which uncovered skills that make one program manager more successful than another. Upon discussing the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) paper later that day with my husband, a fellow *WoW* gamer and business school student, the topic led to a new paradigm of program management for me. My husband helped me to broaden my perspective about program management to incorporate all organized experiences. I began to conceptualize program management as a method that I valued highly in the gaming world and went from believing that I had no program management familiarity to identifying that I had several years of experience and success leading and managing a large scale, online, interactive program.

I began to ponder these overlapping characteristics between my gaming experience and the professional program management realm in depth. Research has shown, for example, that leadership quality contributes to success in the popular video game, *WoW* (Reeves, Malone, and O’Driscoll, 2008; Reeves & Read, 2009). Despite my best efforts, a literature review on the University of Pennsylvania’s Proquest and EBSCOhost databases did not reveal any specific literature connecting virtual gaming ecosystems and the professional program management or project management communities.

Partington, Pellegrinelli and Young’s (2005) paper helped me to see these relationships more clearly. I came to understand that “[a]ny vehicle for an individual to increase their experience and reservoir of knowledge is an asset....*World of Warcraft* may be a virtual world but the interactions and experiences are real” (Wankel, 2010, p. 19). Being a guild leader was a unique experience in leadership of a voluntary virtual team that provided me with a foundational experience in program management and leadership.

To generate a proof of concept between my personal experience in virtual gaming program management and professional program management explicit, I focused intently on the program management competency approach taken by Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005). This approach was selected because of my overwhelming familiarity with their competency model. During my studies of program management, I spent two classroom sessions engaged in discussions about the nuances and specifics of the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) competencies. The classroom discussion led to conversations on Penn forums and eventually to a graded paper on the topic. My grounded understanding of this paper gave me the confidence to apply it as a foundation for the study of *WoW* guild leadership.

Further research on studies that used the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) paper as a credible and readily accepted model (Maylor, Brady, Cooke-Davies, & Hodgson, 2006; Martinsuo & Lehtonen, 2007) are available. Subsequent research by one of the researchers, Serge Pellegrinelli (Pellegrinelli, Partington, Hemingway, Mohdzain, & Shah, 2007; Pellegrinelli, 2008; Pellegrinelli, 2011) provided me with assurance that the original research (2005) was capable of application in other areas of the program management realm.

Potential Implications for the Professional Program Management Community

It is important to make this connection for the professional program management community because this kind of research supports the clarification of the concept of effectiveness in their work. Imagine an employer looking to hire a new program manager. If the attributes required of a guild leader to effectively coordinate his or her teams are similar to the attributes required of a program manager, a prospective employer can find a potentially qualified employee by hiring a successful guild leader in the ever-increasing pool of gamer applicants. The guild leader may only know program management through a gaming lens, but with the attributes

and foundation for leadership already in place, successful program management application might surely follow more easily.

Another consideration relates to Dodig-Crnkovic and Larsson's (2005) attention toward virtual learning. They argue that highly complex games provide players with many outlets for learning. Virtual games based in history can stimulate players to investigate the real stories behind the games. New social constructs can emerge from building virtual communities; and games that require quantifiable data to succeed can encourage the players to test hypotheses and analyze the results (Dodig-Crnkovic & Larsson, 2005). The concept of bringing virtual games into the learning experiences is not new (Annetta, Murray, Laird, Bohr, & Park, 2006; DeKanter, 2004). Consider the implications for the program management community – virtual education can be transformational toward continuous program management education and development.

Structure of Thesis

My Capstone thesis argues, through the creation of a pilot study, that the attributes of *WoW* guild leaders have the potential to be transferable into the framework of program management. From my experience, these two leaders assume similar organizational roles, but they may or may not require the same attributes for success. The research will explore professional program management and *WoW* guild leader similarities.

Chapter 2 reviews pertinent program and project management literatures including the history of program management and the program lifecycle. This chapter addresses the differences between MMO games and other cooperative computer games, the basics of *WoW* gameplay, and the relevant changes to *WoW* since its creation in 2004. I also review common terms used in this gaming environment that are important for the reader's frame of reference.

Chapter 3, on methodology, begins with an overview of the data that was excluded from the capstone. This chapter then explains the research methodology used for data gathering. Chapter 4 is on the results and examines the collected data, beginning with a comparative review of qualitative data gathered from literary sources. Then, I explain the data examples from interviews that I conducted with *WoW* guild leaders and raid leaders about their individualized perspectives on the skills necessary for guild progression. I also discuss an artifact analysis relating to guild leader advice on a multitude of topics related to game leadership. I finish up this chapter with a guild leader advice analysis.

Chapter 5, Discussion and Conclusion, summarizes my thoughts on the research process and findings from Chapter 4. This chapter also includes a summary, research limitations, a research finding worthy of acknowledgement, and suggestions for further research opportunities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Program Management

Organizations continually create projects. These projects may be large or small in scale and vary in structure, framework, budget, time to complete, and complexity. At the other end of the business spectrum are portfolios. Project portfolios groups of projects formed with the vision, goals, and budget of the company in mind. In between projects and portfolios are programs. Programs can range from a collection of projects that are loosely connected by a similar portfolio theme to an umbrella over a network of interlocking projects and subprograms that are interdependent. Organizations often have leadership development programs, sustainability programs, and marketing programs – but what makes it a program?

History and Context

According to Artto, Martinsuo, Gemunden, and Murtoaro (2009) “when modern project management emerged between the 1930s and 1950s, the terms project and program management were used interchangeably” (p. 1). Although the authors do not note when a distinction began to be made between these two types of management, these authors marked 1986 as the year to begin an archive research study on program versus project management. Their process included an analysis of 517 program articles and 1164 project articles to uncover distinct themes. Based on this research, ranging from 1986 to 2006, Artto, et. al (2009) generated a top 10 list of popular themes for both project management and program management related articles. Table 1 is a breakdown of their findings.

Table 1. Breakdown of Artto, et. al's (2009) Top Ten Rankings

	Program Management	Project Management
Innovation	1	1
Performance	2	2
Model	3	5
Management	4	4
R&D	5	6
Firms	6	9
Strategy	7	
Organization	9	7
Technology	9	8
Systems	9	
Success		10
New Product Development		3

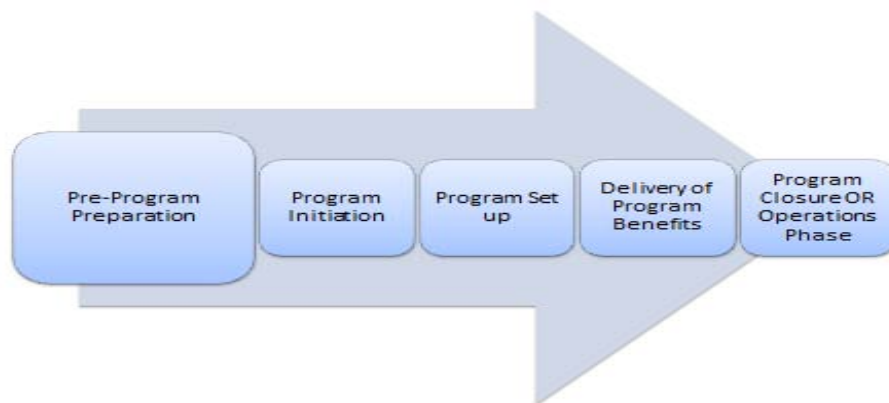
While many of the themes were the same, the overall ranked importance of these themes was different based on whether the article was program-related or project-related. Some themes, such as success, new product development, systems, and strategy were popular topics for only projects or programs, but not both. As a result, one can see the different focuses of project management versus program management.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) represents the industry standard for many employers and practitioners of project, program, and portfolio management. Their definition of project management is “the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements” (Project Management Institute, Inc, 2012, para. 12). According to the PMI Lexicon, the definition of program management is “the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to a program to meet the program requirements and to obtain benefits and control not available by managing projects individually” (Project Management Institute, Inc, 2012, para. 12). PMI began printing a “Standard for Program Management” in 2006 which supplies greater details about what knowledge, skills, tools, and

techniques were applicable. The process of using program management models encourages “different ways of thinking and acting such as embracing change, fostering inclusion, blurring boundaries, iterating, deferring decisions, building in redundancy” (Pellegrinelli, 2011, Labels, para. 3).

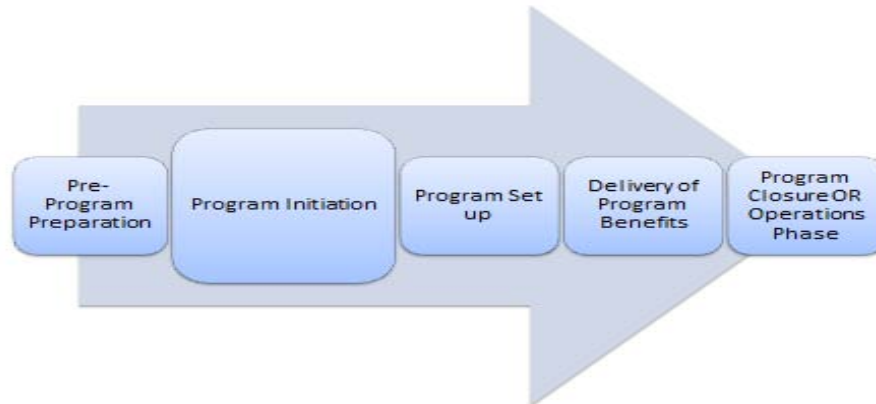
Project Management Institute, Inc (2008b) lists four determined steps and two alternative steps for a program’s life cycle. These are the four key steps: Pre-program preparations, program initiation, program set up, and the delivery program benefits. The two possible conclusions to the program are either program closure or the transition into an operation phase (Project Management Institute, 2008b).

Figure 1: Pre-Program Preparation from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)



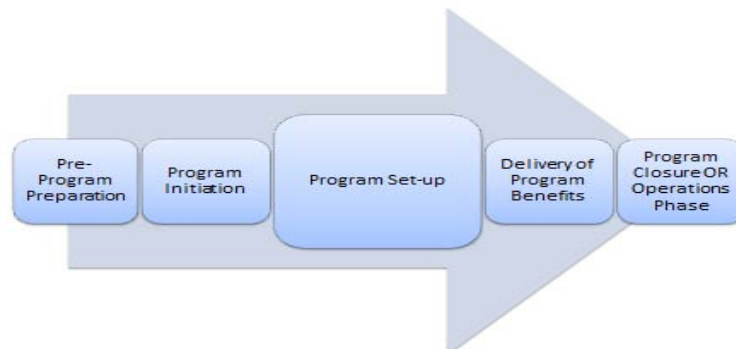
Pre-program preparation includes duties such as a review of the program selection process, the development of a plan for initiation, the description of organizational objectives, and the formation of milestones for the tracking of outputs and outcomes (Project Management Institute, 2008b). The definition of an output is “a product, result, or service generated by a process” (Project Management Institute, 2008b, p. 311). The next step is to build on the plan for initiation.

Figure 2. Program Initiation from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)



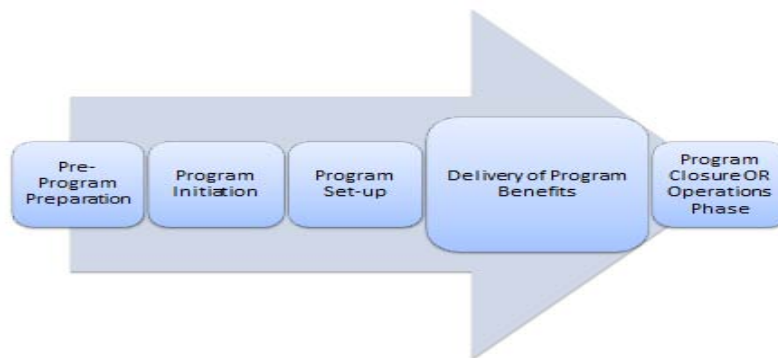
The program initiation step builds on the pre-program preparation foundation. The objective is to communicate proposed output and outcome specifics, expected risks and resources, scope and benefits strategy. The formal program document can also cover dozens of other topics. Before moving onto the next stage, the infrastructure, stakeholder map, and a high level program plan are all requirements of this phase (Project Management Institute, 2008b).

Figure 3. Program Set-up from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)



The next phase is program setup. This stage focuses on specifics such as the program schedule, cost estimates, the parameters of scope, and the procurement of internal and external resources. A Program Management Office (PMO) needs the preparation and qualifications to support the program, as well as the facilities and framework for delivering the program benefits. The establishment of all these areas should occur before moving beyond this step (Project Management Institute, 2008b).

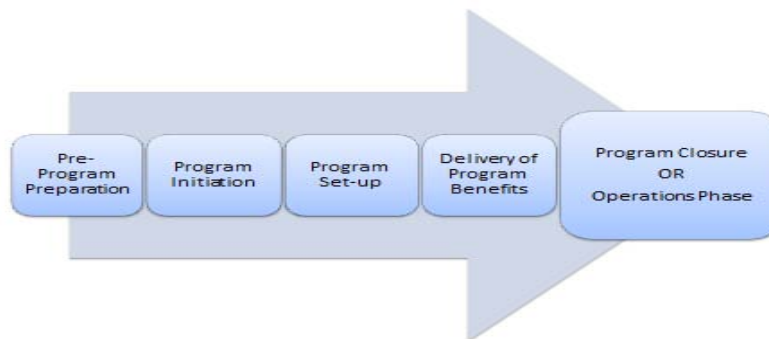
Figure 4. Delivery of Benefits from PMI Program Management Standard (2008)



The delivery of program benefits is where “the core work of the program – through its components – begins” (Project Management Institute, 2008b, p. 28). This is the time for projects under the program’s support to receive introductions, prioritization, resource allocation plans, risk management plans, and other organizational processes that ensure connection to the program vision and benefits realization plan. Once this phase occurs, objectives include identifying issues and risks and maximizing the delivery of benefits. In this stage “program managers ensure and check alignment; project managers keep the detail of each project under control” (Project

Management Institute, 2008b, p. 29). This phase ends when the realization of benefits happens (Project Management Institute, 2008b).

Figure 5. Program Closure or Transition to Operations from
PMI Program Management Standard (2008)



The final stage is either the closure of the program or its transformation into an operational phase to be integrated into the normal routine of the organization. At this decision point, organizations will typically review benefits, dismantle the infrastructure surrounding the program, disband the team, make stakeholders aware of the closure, and document lessons learned. In some cases, programs only complete some of these activities, but purposefully retain enough operational effectiveness to resume the program in a less demanding format (Project Management Institute, 2008b). Operational effectiveness in this context simply means that the program becomes part of the daily activities of the organization with no program management oversight.

Program Management Competency Models and Theories

Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) made the case that the role of program management was not simply an extension of project management: “Corporate leaders know that

promoting proven project managers into a programme manager role is unreliable, yet little rigorous research has been done into the distinctiveness of programme management competence” (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005, p. 87). The authors argued that “success, or even excellence, in ‘project management’ is unlikely, on its own, to be a reliable guide to prospective or potential performance in managing complex strategic programmes” (Partington, Pelleginelli, and Young, 2005, p. 93). Eloquently put, successful program managers need:

a subtle blend of interpersonal skills and personal credibility, a deep understanding of the political dynamics of the formal and informal networks that form the organizational context, and a great knowledge of the broader strategic context. Few would deny that such attributes are also needed to some extent by project managers, but most would agree that, in a programme management role they need to be subtler, deeper, and greater, with increased reliance on ... ‘intelligent unconscious’ (Partington, Pellegrinelli, & Young, 2005, p. 87-88).

Their conclusion is that accomplishment in project management roles and program management roles require different skill sets.

To support this, the authors completed a phenomenographic study which they defined as an “interpretive approach to studying human competence.... to understand what individual workers conceive of as work and, through the elicitation of examples, how they conceive of it” (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005, p. 89). Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) started their research by framing the study as a cross-industry research process to look for the best practices in program management.

The research team, comprised of Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005), began with the request for participation by five large organizations in the United Kingdom that acknowledged the use of program management in 2001 and 2002 (Pellegrinelli, 2008). The process involved the identification of associated skills, also known as attributes. Partington,

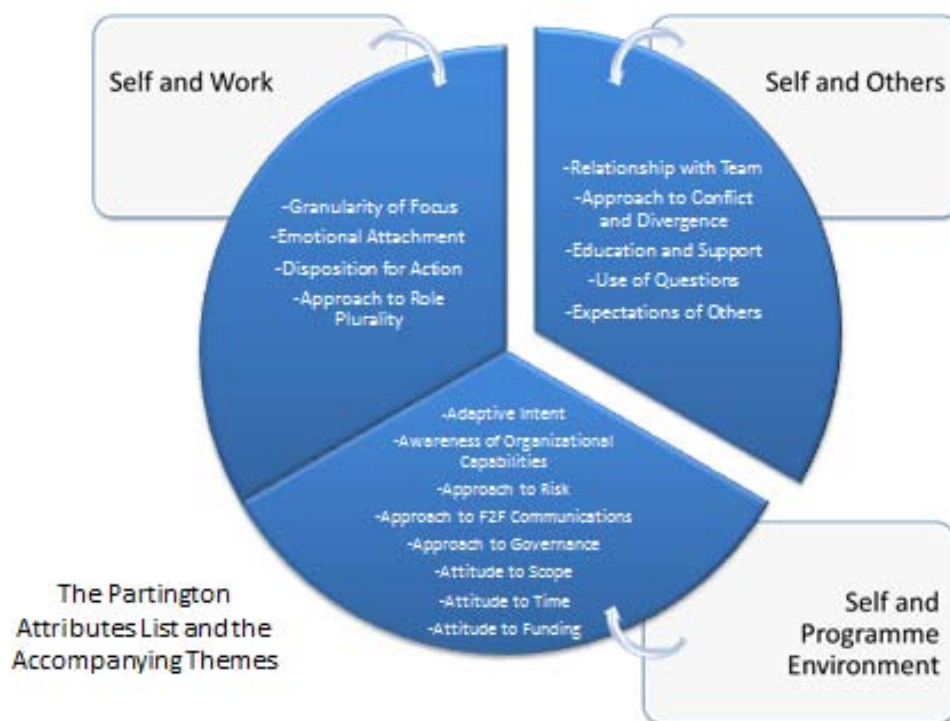
Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) accomplished this through shadowing and interviewing program management teams about common conceptions of program management success. The final results included seven industries and 15 programs. The data table Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) used in their paper is available in Table 2.

level is: a “hierarchy of levels of conception” (p. 90). As a result, the terminology “maturity level” was the natural way to refer to conception in this Capstone paper.

The results of the research suggested that perceived program management success could be explained by higher level conceptions relating to 17 specific behavioral attributes. Each attribute could be defined in terms of four distinct maturity levels. The 17 attribute themes were observed to be related to the relationships that program managers exhibited between “Self and Work,” “Self and Others,” and “Self and Programme Environment” (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. A Visual Model of Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young’s (2005)

Themes and Attributes List



The maturity levels in each category develop through four general stages: focus on scope, focus on impact of program, focus on program outputs and outcomes, and focus on overall organizational strategy. Figure 7 below is a visual of these levels. Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) discuss these levels in more detail:

Managers with the lowest level conception worked with the assumption that departments were there to deliver and did not see it as their job to be concerned about possible shortcomings. At Level 2 managers not only perceived the strengths and weaknesses of contributing departments but closely monitored shortcomings, pushing hard when delivery was threatened. At Level 3 managers were more prepared to escalate possible shortcomings or actual issues arising from internal departments, lack of capability, and to go outside the organization without hesitation. At level 4 managers were similarly prepared to go outside, but only after they had explored internal possibilities and opportunities for organizational development beyond the boundaries of their immediate programme (p. 93).

Figure 7. Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) Maturity Levels

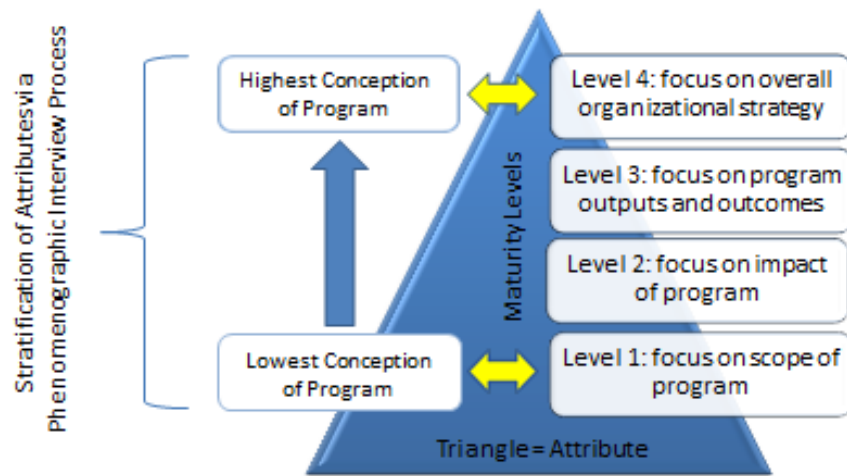


Table 3 presents the four attributes that comprise the “self and work” theme (S1 through S4) and maturity levels (Level 1 through Level 4).

Table 3. Excerpt from Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young’s (2005)

Competency Model – Self and Work

<i>Relationship between self and work</i>		Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Attributes ↑ ↓	S1. Granularity of Focus	Well-planned detail	Summary plan and broad understanding of internal impact outside project	Level 2 plus personal involvement in selected detail when deemed necessary, for stakeholder benefits	Level 3 plus strong future orientation and understanding of external context
	S2. Emotional Attachment	Detached, focused	Need to be associated with successful delivery of organizational benefits	Passionately committed to achievement of programme outcomes	Committed to delivery of external outcomes; Able to disconnect
	S3. Disposition for Action	Trouble-shooter; Procedural	Proactive, analytical; Procedural	Experimental, reflective; Flexible approach to programme rules and procedures	Intuitively reconfigures and realigns the organization; Makes the programme rules
	S4. Approach to Role Plurality	Adopts a focused, single role	Fulfills multiple roles, but is uncomfortable with role conflict	Copes by adopting a clear position when roles potentially conflict	Takes on multiple roles to integrate divergent interests
		← Maturity Levels →			

The full description of the 17 attributes (see Appendix B) is the foundation of the comparison between program managers and guild leaders in this pilot study.

While some program managers will begin their new roles with the highest maturity levels learned through other roles, several newly promoted program manager will possess only the lower maturity levels of the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model at the start. The optimal scenario is to have all program managers within an organization possess the highest maturity levels as learned attribute functions. According to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005), program managers who increase their maturity levels in the greatest number of attributes and apply those same attributes appropriately for the organization are presumed to be among the most successful in the field. Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) are not the only researchers who found distinctions in the competencies of program managers.

Levin and Ward (2011) created a skill assessment model in “Program Management Complexity: A Competency Model” (See Table 4). Similar to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005), Levin and Ward (2011) argue that in order to progress from the state of project management to that of program management, a person must adapt to increasing levels of complexity in a set of areas required for success in the program management realm. For example, having the skill to create success through a non-strategic focus may be very appropriate for a project manager. However, if a program manager were to use the same non-strategic focus toward their program, the results probably will not be as successful. Although not mutually exclusive, obvious differences in expected competencies exist between these two roles as can be seen in Table 4.

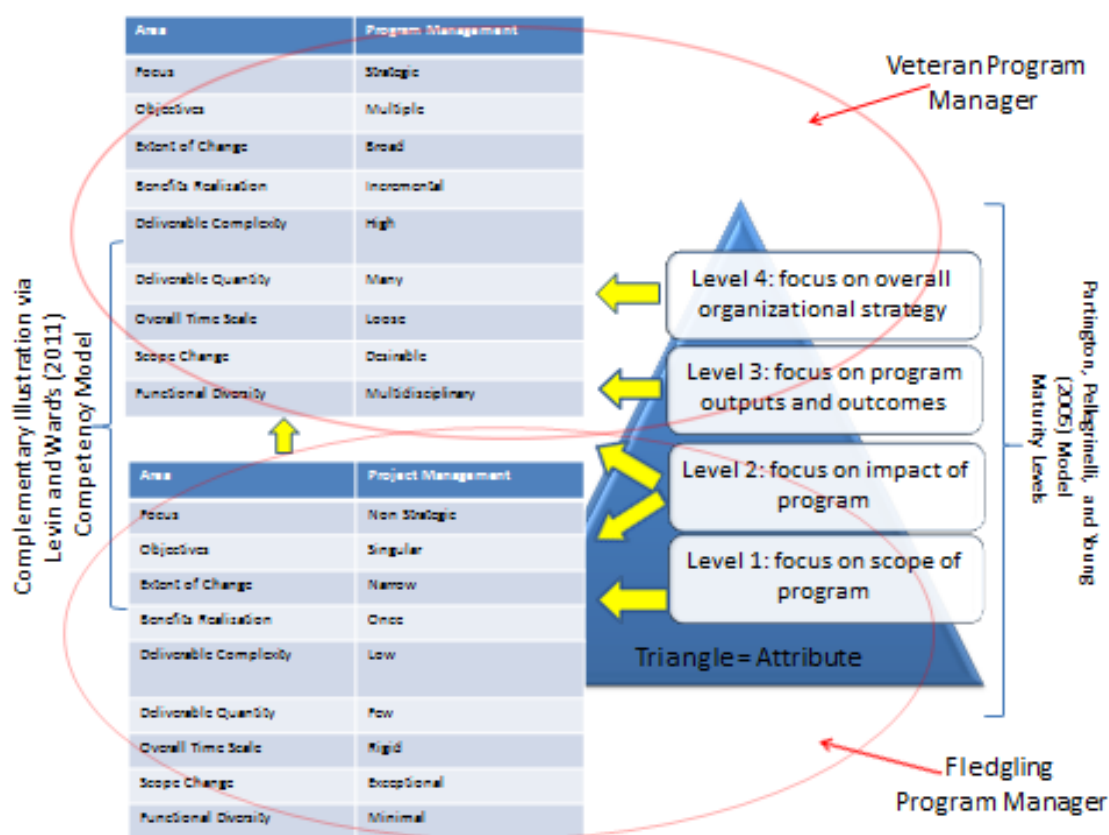
Table 4. Levin and Ward (2011): Differences between Project and Program Management

Area	Project Management	Program Management
Focus	Non strategic	Strategic
Objectives	Singular	Multiple
Extent of Change	Narrow	Broad
Benefits Realization	Once	Incremental
Deliverable Complexity	Low	High
Deliverable Quantity	Few	Many
Overall Time Scale	Rigid	Loose
Scope Change	Exceptional	Desirable
Functional Diversity	Minimal	Multidisciplinary

Combining these competencies produces the model shown in Figure 8 below. By integrating these two competency models (Levin & Ward, 2011; Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005), one creates a visual that spans the distinct competencies in the program and project management communities. Despite the differences between project and program

management, the attributes are complementary and cross-functional. The project management attributes, whether used by a project manager or a program manager, are the foundational basis for applying those program management “knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques” (Project Management Institute, 2012, para. 12). For success, the necessary competencies of the project managers and program managers in the PPM community are interdependent.

Figure 8. Project and Program Management Competencies Combined



The project management traits described by Levin and Ward (2011) model align best with the lower level maturity levels of Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005). This combination more closely represents the fledgling program manager who just was promoted from a project management role (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005). A veteran program manager,

however, should possess a greater amount of the higher maturity levels and the second, third, and fourth levels of the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model. By blending the Levin and Ward (2011) table of traits from their two-level project/program framework with the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model, these models can be used to complement each other. Each of these models reinforces the concepts of the other.

It would be appropriate to note that there are at least three other program competency models that were evaluated for use in this study, including Axley (2008); Naquin and Holton (2002); and Paquette (2007). Focus was not placed on these models for a multitude of reasons including: lack of comprehension (one word list-based competencies), limited specificity to program managers, or program management in a particular industry, which went against the objective for a general comparison.

WoW Literature Review

The literature on the topic of *WoW* is broad, with topics ranging from the economics of the in-game auction house system (Barnett & Archambault, 2010) to the social implications of character races (Higgin, 2009). The *WoW* video game was described already in detail by Causer (2011) and Golub (2010), thus will not receive an in-depth review. The roles and responsibilities of raiding guild leadership roles and the dynamics of a guild are both crucial topics to cover here. Because the literature on guild dynamics in *WoW* has many limitations, interviews with SMEs were relied on to fill in knowledge gaps where literature was unavailable.

The first SME, James Agnes, began playing *WoW* in April 2005, approximately six months after the game was released. He estimates that he has between 200 and 250 days played within the game. “Days played” is a term used to denote how many cumulative hours a player is in the game engaged with his or her character. For James, these 200 to 250 days over the course

of seven years equates to 13 to 16 hours a week on average in the game. He continues to have an active \$15/month subscription today – an aggregate value of over \$1300 in nearly eight years.

The second SME, Justin Colvin, began playing *WoW* in 2005. He estimates that he has 600 days played within the game or roughly 40 hours a week over the last seven years. Some weeks, he spends 100 hours in the game. He continues to have an active subscription.

Overview of Computer Games

There are a few popular genres of video games. Primary examples include First-Person Shooters (FPS), Real-Time Strategy (RTS), and Role Playing Games (RPG). FPS is “a type of video game in which players shoot a gun or rocket at an ever-changing scene of ‘bad guys.’ First-person shooter games may be designed for single players or multiple players” (Ziff Davis, 2012a, First Person Shooter). When the game has a big weapon at the forefront of the screen, the odds are in favor of it being a First Person Shooter. FPS games include titles such as *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* and *Halo*. Figure 9 provides an image from the FPS *Modern Warfare 3*.

Figure 9. *Modern Warfare 3* Image Provided by IGNentertainment



RTS games are not as mainstream. This is the “type of video game in which players exercise strategy along the way, typically to conquer enemies and reach a final destination

without being eradicated” (Ziff Davis, 2012b, Real Time Strategy). Real time strategies focus on causing the player to make split-second decisions to win and may not include any weapon beyond wit. Popular RTS games include *Starcraft II* and *Warcraft III*. Figure 10 provides an image from *StarCraft II*.

Figure 10. *StarCraft II* Image Provided by IGNentertainment



There are also RPG-specific games. Computer RPG or CRPG is “role playing on the computer, typically in a fantasy environment, although some take place in a medieval setting. A major characteristic of CRPGs is the user’s ability to move freely throughout the venue” (Ziff Davis, 2012c, CRPG). Here the player takes on the persona of a character in the game and follows a predetermined story, completing quests and fighting enemies along the way for added game play, bonuses, and rewards. *DragonAge*, *Fable*, and *SkyRim* are games designed in this play style. Figure 11 provides an image of this genre through a *SkyRim* trailer.

Figure 11. *SkyRim* Image Provided by IGNentertainment



Similar, but more complex is the Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG). An MMORPG, which includes *WoW*, is: “A role playing game on the computer played by many people. An MMORPG differs from a regular computer role playing game (CRPG) because its environment is perpetual. People log in, join the game, take on their role and leave whenever they wish, but the game continues” (Ziff Davis, 2012d, MMORPG). Figure 12 illustrates what it looks like to be in a PvE raid in *WoW*.

Figure 12. *WoW* Image Provided by IGNentertainment



Games like *WoW* and other MMORPGs are played similar to CRPG, but without the predetermined storyline and off button. For example, a *WoW* player may turn off the game as a member of a guild but return the following day as a nonmember for one reason or another (Ducheneaut, Yee, Nickell, & Moore, 2007). Examples of this scenario include: the guild disbanded or the guild leader opted to remove the player from the guild because of too many conflicts with other players. As in a real, physical environment, the game does not stop because he or she is not there to react, but continues to exist, grow, and change without the player's assistance.

WoW History and Guild Dynamics

WoW emerged as an MMORPG game toward the end of 2004 (Golub, 2010) to celebrate Blizzard Entertainment's 10-year anniversary of their *Warcraft* franchise, formerly only an RTS-formatted brand. Since then, this MMORPG amassed and retained over 10 million monthly subscribers to become the most successful MMO to date (Bates, 2011; Thureau & Bauckhage, 2010). In its eight-year history, the game evolved through the release of expansions. An expansion is the developer's release of new content for a game that dramatically increases the number of activities available for the average player¹ (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012). The strategy of the expansion is to retain the player base through the creation of different tactics and subtleties that keep the game fresh and interesting. In *WoW*, expansions highlight new PvE raiding content for those who are at the endgame level.

WoW players witnessed the arrival of four expansions: *Burning Crusade* (Version 2.0, 2007); *Wrath of the Lich King* (Version 3.0, 2008); *Cataclysm* (Version 4.0, 2010) (Thureau & Bauckhage, 2010); and *Mists of Pandaria* (Version 5.0, 2012). Each expansion created new

¹ For the rest of this thesis, the words: player, raider, attendee, and character are interchangeable.

experiences for the players in gaming mechanics, networking capabilities, and guild dynamics (Golub, 2010). Table 5 provides the different expansions, their nicknames, the maximum level, and the typical raid size. Maximum level refers to the game designers' rationalization for when players earned enough experience in the game dynamics to put it to use in quality endgame content.

Table 5. Visual Compilation of *WoW* and Expansion Basics

Expansion Guide			
Name	Nickname	Max Level	Raid Size
World of Warcraft	Vanilla	60	20 or 40
Burning Crusade	BC	70	10 or 25
Wrath of the Lich King	WotLK/Wrath	80	10 or 25
Cataclysm	Cata	85	10 or 25
Mists of Pandaria	MoP	90	10 or 25

Chen, Sun, and Hsieh (2008) note, “Whereas guilds used to be viewed as informal and unplanned organizations, some recently released online games have incorporated guild formation into their structure, adding mechanisms for establishing guilds and designing goals and missions that require coordinated actions by members of well-organized teams” (p. 293). Because a guild provides admission to combined resources, knowledge and a community of tight-knit players, joining a guild is routine for the average game player (Ducheneaut, Yee, Nickell, & Moore, 2007). *WoW* incorporated guilds on the first day of release to promote unity and cooperative play (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012). Wankel (2010) explains the reason for guilds:

One of the critical dynamics of massively multiplayer roleplaying games such as *World of Warcraft*, is that the endgame content is designed to be played by a consistent group of players with success being determined over a period of months, rather than hours. This

long-term philosophy creates a dynamic where organization and structure are necessary to succeed. A player cannot simply log into the game whenever the mood strikes them, look for a raid and expect to succeed: just as a business professional could not simply drive downtown, announce that they want to work for the next eight hours and expect to be employed (p. 21).

Guild leadership can begin in one of two ways. In the first situation, a player consciously decides to start a guild, purchases what is known as a “guild charter,” finds nine players in the game who will “sign” the charter via a virtual interaction, creates a name for the guild, and turns in the completely signed charter to a simulated guild host in the game. Once the charter is filed, the player and the nine people who signed the charter are the founding members of a new guild (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012). The guild leader can invite more members, create a hierarchy, decide on the scope and reward system of the guild and evaluate other important tasks for building a personal framework (Ducheneaut, et. al, 2007; Wankel, 2010). Blizzard Entertainment provides guild leaders with a lot of freedoms for creating personal frameworks. Examples of frameworks include raiding guilds, girls-only social guilds, role-playing guilds, or guilds of real life friends. Table 6 is an example of the roles that an average player would see within most *WoW* guild frameworks and descriptions of the general tasks for these roles.

Table 6. A Basic Breakdown of a Typical Guild Hierarchy and Roles

<u>Role</u>	<u>Job Description</u>
Guild Leader	Governance over everything in the guild, dictates who takes on what roles
Raid Leader	Manages the raids/strategy, distributes rewards
Class Leader	Dictates how well people within their class are doing in raids
Officer	Offers advice to the guild leader/raid leader/ class leader
Veterans	Typical eyes and ears of the guild - tip off higher ups on issues
Members	Guild members who raid with the guild, no managing, proven to follow orders
Initiates	New members who need to prove their ability to follow directions before raiding

The second method to become a guild leader follows all the steps of the first; however, a guild leader voluntarily gives up leadership to another guild member who may be more capable or willing to be in charge. This can occur at any point in time during the guild's existence, from the moment of creation onward. At times, the leadership mantle moves because the original guild leader quits the game or no longer wants to be the decision maker. At other times, the transition occurs because the officers of the guild find the current leader to be a wrong fit, for any multitude of reasons, and request a new player who is perceived to be a better leader – to take the place of a guild's current official leader (Reeves, Malone & O'Driscoll, 2008; Wankel, 2010).

In both cases, if the majority of the guild's player base is at maximum level as signified in Table 5, it is considered an endgame guild - content available to only those players who are at maximum level. Endgame content typically refers to PvE raiding. Three choices for the guild scope and vision are available at this crossroad: the guild leader can choose for the guild to focus on PvE raiding, Player versus Player content (PvP) or a mixture of both types of content. Typically, the decision is reflective of the interests of the player base (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012). The focus of this paper is on the PvE endgame raiding guild because this type of guild is the most comparable to a business organization. A PvE endgame raiding guild needs a vision, scope, lower hierarchy, rules, meetings, and preparation planning. While other types of guilds may or may not have these concerns, raiding guilds always do.

A raid is a volunteer PvE encounter that a group of players join in the hopes of earning prestige and rewards through successful completion (Golub, 2010). Raids are on predetermined days of the week, as determined by either the guild leader or the player base preference (Ducheneaut, et al, 2007; Wankel, 2010). Some guilds follow a format of weekend raiding to

cater to the working adult. Other guilds may raid late-night to supply the average college student with an outlet for raiding. Regardless of the schedule, raids requiring coordination of up to 40 players are essential to progress and beat the game. Since it is quite difficult to assemble a pick-up group of this size – “some formal coordination mechanisms are required, and the guilds provide such an environment” (Ducheneaut, et al, 2007, p. 1).

Figure 13 shows a typical *WoW* raiding event. After completing the raid by finishing the last of the content, guild members typically group up for a souvenir picture of the accomplishment. All the neon green in the middle of the screen is the clumping of all the name tags for all the members of the raid – there were 40 people in that group to strategize, coordinate, and plan for. Without all of them working together and following the directions of the raid leader, the raid would not have succeeded.

Figure 13. A Basic *WoW* Raid



Coordination involves following a checklist that includes: the attendee list, the back-up attendee list, a copy of the raid strategy, additional supplies to supplement the group, among other items and tasks (Wankel, 2010). Once this list is confirmed, the raid leader invites those players to a formal raid. Everyone in the grouping travels in the game to a specific virtual location where a portal exists. This portal is the visual entrance to the PvE event and only admits a finite number of players who have to be members of the formal raid. Blizzard Entertainment sets the limitation for the amount of players who can enter the portal; the guild leader can do little to mitigate this particular risk aside from bring the best players. These elite guild members use their real-life speed, skills, endurance, adaptability and perseverance to create successful outcomes in these stressful raid situations (Golub, 2010; J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

The experience of raiding can be intense, as noted by Golub (2010):

Raid encounters are high-pressure, emotionally intense, ritualistic activities in which players learn to repeatedly perform the same actions in a more or less identical way in a coordinated manner in order to kill a boss.... Technically challenging, phenomenologically intense, emotionally compelling, and deeply connected with self-esteem and group membership, raiding involves serious investments of time and effort, and as a result, successful downing of major bosses is a collective accomplishment that creates social solidarity and can even serve as an important moment in the biographies of individual players (p. 10).

Blizzard Entertainment purposefully designed the endgame content of raiding to be a time-consuming, never-ending experience that keeps the player sufficiently motivated to pay \$15 a month to continue. With increasing difficulty added by every expansion (Golub, 2010), Blizzard effectively created a progressive game to challenge hundreds of guilds to accomplish a little more today than they did yesterday.

Upon studying MMO games, Yee (2006) discovered that “different people choose to play games for very different reasons, and thus, the same video game may have very different

meanings or consequences for different players.” To elaborate, Yee found that a player’s motivation in video games relates to achievement, socialization, or immersion. A summary of his components relating to motivation are available in Table 7.

Table 7. Subcomponents Revealed as Motivating Factors in Video Games (Yee, 2006)

<i>Achievement</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Immersion</i>
Advancement	Socializing	Discovery
Progress, Power, Accumulation, Status	Casual Chat, Helping Others, Making Friends	Exploration, Lore, Finding Hidden Things
Mechanics	Relationship	Role-Playing
Numbers, Optimization, Templating, Analysis	Personal, Self-Disclosure, Find and Give Support	Story Line, Character History, Roles, Fantasy
Competition	Teamwork	Customization
Challenging Others, Provocation, Domination	Collaboration, Groups, Group Achievements	Appearances, Accessories, Style, Color Schemes
		Escapism
		Relax, Escape from Real Life, Avoid Real-Life Problems

Completing group achievements are the typical objectives of *WoW* raiding guilds. The more complex achievements a guild attains, the higher quality players the guild can retain and recruit. A guild with a good reputation can have a website with a formal application page for candidates who want to gain introductions to that guild (Golub, 2010). Part of the allure of applying, interviewing, and enduring a trial period with an ‘elite’ or ‘uber’ guild is the prestige of membership and the exposure to new raiding content introduced by the game developers (Ducheneaut, et al, 2007).

“As the guild’s raid statistics and achievement statistics measurably improve, the satisfaction of resource building is amplified by celebrating it with so many others” (McGonigal, 2011, p. 66). Only the top guilds have the coordination and the manpower to enter the newest raids first – and can hold the bragging rights, too. Meanwhile, the guild leader must have a strong grasp of what his or her guild can accomplish on a raid, in order to prevent the guild from losing prestige as a result of too many failed attempts at an endeavor: “poor guild member management over multiple raid missions often leads to decline and instability” (Chen, Sun, & Hsieh, 2008, p. 300). Figure 14 is an example of how players can monitor any guild’s achievements in *WoW*.

Figure 14. Guild Achievements



Upon completing portions of a raid, typically two to five rewards are available. The allure of possible rewards, also known as “loot,” makes a raid worth attending on a regular basis. The challenge of leadership is to disperse the rewards fairly amongst the 10-40 people who helped earn the loot. Fairness in loot distribution is an imperative step for maintaining good guild relations, as “[t]he reward also improves the future performance of the player because it enhances their gear and equipment” (Wankel, 2010, p. 197) permanently. A common way to distribute rewards is through the use of Dragon Kill Points. Dragon kill points (DKP) is a method for guilds leaders to auction off loot during the raid. Earning loot rewards after a raid can be considered motivation subcomponents of Advancement, Mechanics, and Customization (Yee, 2006) in Table 7 above.

Guilds must first be successful at raiding to get to the point of distributing rewards. The basic definition of success in this context is the completion of a raid encounter that Blizzard created. A guild leader may set subjective goals higher than this basic definition. An example of an alternative version of success would be a new record for how long it took the guild to complete the encounter. Metrics of success this week may change next week depending on the motivations and resources of the guild and its leader.

Some players who do not feel adequately rewarded for their work, time, or other reasons, may perceive personal insult/slight and take advantage of the low barrier for transfer to join another guild perceived as more fair (Ducheneaut, et. al, 2007). In extreme cases, guilds disband over perceptions of unfair loot distribution tactics. This topic of loot distribution is an example that reaffirms that “true leadership only exists when the followers have the freedom to walk away from that leader” (Wankel, 2010, p. 55). An effective guild leader must have a balanced

perspective of the needs and interests of all members - with loot, raid content, play style, and camaraderie all taken into consideration. Ducheneaut, et. al (2007) note that this is because...

guilds are fragile social groups, and many do not survive very long. This fragility is almost certainly due to a broad combination of factors. Leadership style, for instance, is often cited by players. Game design is another contributor: players “burn out” due to the intense “grind” required to advance in MMOGs and leave the game, abandoning their guild at the same time. “Drama” (public conflict between two or more guild members) and internal politics (e.g., arguments over who gets access to the most powerful “loot” dropped by monsters) have also been the demise of many guilds. (p. 1).

Dynamics of Game Play

The original version of the *WoW*, before any of the expansions, is nostalgically referred to as “Vanilla” similar to plain vanilla ice cream (Wankel, 2010). The popular raids had 20 or 40-player groups. This meant that to raid, a guild leader needed at least 20 guild members to be online at the same time, prepared to dedicate an average of three hours to this team-based activity (Wankel, 2010). However:

The core endgame content, which defined the success or failure of guilds, was in forty player raids. As a result, the majority of small leveling guilds were forced to find a way to compete, or disappear (Wankel, 2010, p. 67).

Success in this context is a guild’s raid progression toward ‘beating the game’ which at the time required a 40-person group. Failure could have many reasons including not enough players or a guild leader who did not know how to effectively strategize, but the result was the same: no raiding progression.

Success takes coordination, preparation, and dedication by everyone involved. To achieve this, a guild leader needed to start with an appropriate number of dedicated guild members willing to join and be managed: with too few players the raid leader does not have enough attendees online to start the raid; with too many players, the guild risked losing people

because of the finite raid spots – rewards would be spread too thin (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

An abrupt change to the raiding regulations occurred with the release of the first expansion, *Burning Crusade (BC)*. Blizzard changed the raiding program attendance to 10 or 25-player limitations (Chen, Sun, & Hsieh, 2007; Wankel, 2010). Guilds that had the appropriate number of players for 40-player raids had players clamoring for participation in the smaller teams just released. As a response, some guild leaders recruited 10 additional players and created two 25-player groups. Other guild leaders took this time to play favorites and remove the least dedicated players from the raiding roster (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012). Another option was to cross-train raiders in new functions to increase the number of capable players in the existing pool of possible attendees for the raids (Wankel, 2010).

Regardless of how the guild leaders and members responded to the options for the new 10 and 25-player raid programs, the new expansion changed the meaning of leadership. Success in the old 40-player Vanilla raids was based on the weighted factors of some coordination and a great deal of manpower. The new, smaller raids of *BC* saw the weights for success changed to some manpower and a great deal of coordination. To survive and succeed with fewer guild members, recruitment shifted from quantity to quality (Wankel, 2010). These new dynamics allowed by Blizzard's redesign made guilds easier for guild leaders to maintain, because of their smaller size and the greater reward to raider ratio. (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

The second expansion, *Wrath of the Lich King (WotLK)*, exposed guilds and their leaders to the same trend of 10 and 25-player raids. Despite the same size of the raids, guild dynamics

still managed to change in *WotLK*. This time, Blizzard was responding to their aging demographic as reported by Wankel (2010):

Players who loved the old system, now disliked it because they had jobs and responsibilities, and could no longer afford to devote all of their spare time to computer gaming. [Blizzard] realized that the system had to change. They realized that if [the consumers] were going to continue to participate in the game, it had to cater to their more casual time investment (p. 327).

WotLK sent the majority of successful raiding back to the quantity over quality style of Vanilla, to cater to new casual gamers. Blizzard's decision for the second expansion showed strong business sense as one can see in a recent survey by Debeauvais, Nardi, Schiano, Ducheneaut, and Yee (2010). They found using a survey that "29% considered themselves casual, 8% hardcore, and 63% in-between" (p. 3). The new platform for raiding no longer required a guild to be successful at playing in the PvE content of the game. Blizzard effectively provided the individual player with the ability to progress without a guild through the use of an in-game application called "the dungeon finder" (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012). Guilds in *WotLK* became a place to play casually and to socialize instead of strategize. *Cataclysm* and *Mists of Pandaria (MoP)* followed suit with the same strategies for guild control, leadership, and raiding.

Summary of *WoW* Guilds

Guilds, for the early and evolving game were essential, but is only an option for gameplay objectives in the most recent versions of *WoW*. A successful raid in Vanilla and to a large extent in *BC* was a planned event, requiring hours of preparation and dedication by many members of a guild. Guild leaders stayed busy juggling the needs and interests of a large group of players while maintaining a strong core of officers for the delegation of tasks – all in the

attempt to succeed by completing progressively harder raid content month after month (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

A few expansions later and now events are facilitated by in-game tools installed by Blizzard Entertainment. Players find it tempting to join available pick-up-groups instead of joining a formal guild for raiding. With this facilitated system in place, the guilds that emerged during the *WotLK* and *Cataclysm* expansions were smaller and more social-based. Leadership was just as likely to be a token role as a serious show of skills because the majority of the player base no longer needed a support group to advance in the game (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

As noted by Debeauvais, et al (2010), there exist three types of players: casual, hardcore, and an 'in-between' group. Those who enjoy in-between and hardcore raiding create guilds that continually raid and progress in the PvE environment. These raiding guilds recognize talent and gamer acumen, and recruit accordingly (Ducheneaut, et al, 2007). Examples of recruitment strategies include: the wooing of skilled players from multiple successful guilds to build a proven player base; or the recruitment of players who are exceptionally knowledgeable about game mechanics (Ducheneaut, et. al, 2007). These strategies can improve guild sustainability through increasing the prospect of successful raid encounters which keeps the primary stakeholders, the raiders, content. The strategic skill, politically savvy, and organizational effectiveness of the Vanilla and *BC* guild leader continue to exist in current raid progression guilds. Because of their focus on the most difficult content in the game, these players and leaders are justly rewarded for their successful efforts in the raiding area of the game. \

Overall, there is an underlying feeling about the process of successful raiding that is best explained by McGonigal (2011):

Games, after all, are the quintessential autotelic activity. We only ever play because we want to. Games don't fuel our appetite for extrinsic reward: they don't pay us, they don't advance our careers, and they don't help us accumulate luxury goods. Instead, games enrich us with intrinsic rewards. They actively engage us in satisfying work that we have the chance to be successful at. They give us a highly structured way to spend time and build bonds with people we like (p. 59).

The Similarities between *WoW* and Program Management

The first connection, which is broader than the roles found in *WoW* and program management, is the connection between video games and real life work. According to Grawitch, Gottschalk, and Munz (2006), there are five healthy workplace practices that organizations should strive to improve: “work-life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety, recognition, and employee involvement” (p. 133). Improving these components of the workplace can in turn decrease stress while increasing job satisfaction, employee morale, and organizational commitment (Grawitch, Gottschalk, and Munz, 2006).

At the same time, gaming environments offer similar healthy practices. Yee's (2006) findings about motivation in MMO video games shared in the History and Guild Dynamics section of this chapter draws comparisons. Table 8 is a visual representation of the similarities that lead to satisfaction and motivation in both the real world (Grawitch, Gottschalk, & Munz, 2006) and the video game environment (Yee, 2006).

Table 8. Similarities for Satisfaction and Motivation

Real Workplace	MMO Environment	
	<i>Subcomponent</i>	<i>Component</i>
Work-Life Balance	Escapism	Immersion
Employee growth and development	Advancement	Achievement
Recognition	Competition	Achievement
Health and Safety	Relationship	Social
Employee Involvement	All	All

A little more refined is the comparison between professional workplaces, such as the program management office, and *WoW*. According to Ducheneaut, et al (2007),

It has been argued that the “video game generation” is acquiring valuable knowledge from games that will help them transform the workplace. Our observations indicate that MMOGs like *WoW* certainly familiarize their players with organizational forms that are prevalent in today’s work environment (p. 847).

Ducheneaut, et. al (2007) also note the importance of role distinction when making connections between video game leadership roles and professional workplaces. Table 9 is a general comparison between *WoW* guild functions and professional program, project, and portfolio (P3) management roles.

Table 9. Comparison of Guild Roles to P3 Roles

<u>World of Warcraft</u>	<u>Projects, Programs, and Portfolios</u>
Guild Leader	Program Manager
Blizzard Entertainment	Governance
Raid Leader	Project Manager
DKP System	Administrative Support
Guild Officers/Guild Leader	Portfolio Review Committee
Raid/Guild Leader	Business Change Manager

According to Table 9, *WoW* guild leaders of raiding guilds have responsibilities similar to professional program managers. Blizzard Entertainment, the *WoW* game maker provides governance. The definition of governance is: “the process of developing, communicating, implementing, monitoring, and assuring the policies, procedures, organizational structures, and practices associated with a given program” (Project Management Institute, Inc, 2008b, p. 258). In this role, Blizzard has many objectives including: plan program quality, provide oversight,

control and monitor program changes, and plan for audits. Table 10 provides examples for how Blizzard fulfills these obligations.

Table 10. Blizzard Entertainment versus Project Management Institute, Inc (2008) Applied Governance Examples

Responsibility	Blizzard Entertainment	Professional Program Governance
Plan Program Quality	A forum update that details planned loot rewards for a new raid and a video showing the basics of the raid	A Benefits Realization Plan that details expected benefits and how the benefits will be achieved
Provide Oversight	Details of Annual Shareholder Report provide an overview of goals, structure, roles and responsibilities relating to their video game.	A Program Governance Plan that describes governance goals, structure, roles and responsibilities, and logistics for their processes
Monitor and Control Program Changes	Blizzard releases "Patch notes" that describe to the consumer what changes are being considered. These changes will typically go on a "test realm" first where players can evaluate the changes for benefits or drawbacks before the changes take effect game-wide	The subsection of a Program Management Plan that covers considerations for changes that develop and influence the program, along with benefits of the changes
Plan for Audits	While the programs do not deal with real money, hidden audits can occur on virtual money if Blizzard receives a tip that a guild purchased virtual money from an external vendor. Audits also occur on raids to ensure that guilds do not use glitches or bugs in the software to complete objectives	Audits can have the goal of ensuring money is spent as planned or to review the program management processes to ensure that the program is being managed in accordance with organizationally approved processes

Raid leaders and officers act as project managers and project assistants; people in these lower management roles complete tasks related to project time, cost and scope. Through continuous consultations with the guild leader, raid leaders and officers understand and act upon the guild leader's strategies, including priorities (scope), planned schedules (time), and reward systems (cost) (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

Like professional program managers, guild leaders need to align activities through strategic involvement. The adaptability around complexity ensures the achievement of program goals. In this context, complexity relates to uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding a program from the first stage of pre-program preparation (guild creation) to the final stage of program closure (the months leading up to a new *WoW* expansion). According to Remington and Pollack (2007), four types of complexities may surround programs and projects: structural complexity, technical complexity, directional complexity, and temporal complexity. *WoW* guild leaders must be able to manage each of these types of complexity in an effective manner.

Structural complexity relates to the “difficulty in managing and keeping track of the huge number of different interconnected tasks and activities” (Remington & Pollack, 2007, p. 7). *WoW* guild leaders must continually balance the activities of guild members who want to raid PvE content, maintain social connections, and participate in PvP content. A guild leader who is clear about the scope and vision of his or her guild has a better chance to navigate structural complexity effectively.

Technical complexity involves techniques that have design problems or have yet to be attempted at all in the program (Remington & Pollack, 2007). Every time the guild majority requests permission to try a new raid, a guild leader can choose to discuss uncertainties surrounding the decision with the raid leader and the guild officers. Because the results are unpredictable and the strategy for the raid is untried, a guild leader who manages this complexity effectively will know when the guild is capable of attempting this risk.

Directional Complexity can be “characterized by unshared goals and goal paths, unclear meanings and hidden agendas” (Remington & Pollack, 2007, p. 7). With guilds averaging 10-50 players, it is common for directional complexity to occur. Hidden agendas could include a guild

member learning a new raid for the purpose of creating an offshoot guild. Unclear meanings typically involve strategy and relate to the uncertainty of technical complexities. An effective guild leader who can navigate the undercurrents of directional complexity can create strategies to mitigate the uncertainties and necessary ambiguities surrounding it.

Temporal Complexity involves the uncertainties of the future, including environmental and strategic alterations (Remington & Pollack, 2007). When new content was released by Blizzard Entertainment, the modifications ranged from new raiding content to changes for individual players. Guild leaders tend to change raid program strategies whenever Blizzard exhibits their right as governance to make program changes. An effective guild leader who can manage temporal complexity is proactive in the approach to the transition.

While there are obvious differences between professional program management and *WoW* guild leadership, many parallels are also prevalent. Guild leaders and program managers manage up (program governance versus Blizzard Entertainment) and down (project managers versus raid leaders) through similar channels and handle comparable types of complexity. The formal phases of a program's lifecycle are similar to the guild lifecycle structure of the average guild – create, recruit, manage the raid program, disband/transition into a social guild. Guild leaders and professional program managers also require similar leadership competencies, which is the topic of Chapter 4.

Leadership in *WoW*

Reeves, Malone and Driscoll's (2008) multi-method study of *WoW* expert leaders provides a framework for understanding the real world leadership skills required to play this game at the highest level. Reeves and Read (2009) and Wankel (2010) provide additional comprehensive examples of leadership relating to the development and sustainability of his

guild's raiding program. These lists of skills are not comprehensive and all-inclusive. The data were limited to the experiences and studies completed by the authors.

According to Wankel (2010) leadership is "focusing of efforts of a group of people toward a common goal and enabling them to work as a team. In general terms, leadership is the ability to get things done through others" (Project Management Institute, 2008a, p. 417). Based on his experiences in the video game environment, Wankel (2010) offered good and bad guild leader character traits which he considered naturally occurring: self-awareness, confidence, admitting to mistakes, approachability, and charisma. Wankel (2010) argued that beyond these character traits were leadership skills that players could develop to "enable leaders to understand their team and lead them successfully (p. 97). These skills included: Understand the audience/guild and their goals; be a strategist; maximize assets; and be the best/work the hardest. Wankel (2010) used a natural versus developed skills approach to provide an experience-based assessment of necessary attributes for how to be an effective guild leader.

In *Total Engagement*, Reeves and Read (2009) introduced a broad overlay for roles and responsibilities in the video game environment through a comparative review on O*NET, a website holding "databases of occupational requirements and worker attributes" in collaboration with the US Department of Labor. Reeves and Read (2009) mapped the required skills for job listings to gaming examples showing how similar skills are used regularly in a video game context. Out of the 40 illustrations, *WoW* examples were present in all but one work category – "using computers and computer systems to program, write software, set up functions, enter data, or process information" (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 50). Examples of *WoW* skills that were evaluated included: communicating with supervisors, peers, or subordinates; documenting/recording information; organizing, planning, and prioritizing work; and interpreting

the meaning of information for others (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 48-51). Guild leader and raid leader anecdotes were prominent in this summary.

Read and Reeves (2009) repeated the matching exercise on a leadership-specific level. The four characteristics, sensemaking, visioning, relating, and inventing, (Ancona, Malone, Orlikowski, and Senge, 2009) were compared; the context was first to the traditional roles of leadership in organizations and then to the non-traditional roles of gaming leadership.

In the study Reeves, Malone, and O'Driscoll (2008) completed, the authors argued that “‘high potentials’ for real world management training end up taking on significant leadership roles in games” (p. 2) based on results of an IBM employee survey. IBM had an interest in leadership in gaming and surveyed their own corporate leaders who are also gamers. Reeves, Malone, and O'Driscoll (2008) found that nearly half the 135 participants believed that skills gained from playing a multiplayer online game were transferrable into the business world. Three-quarters of the survey participants believed environmental factors from the game could be applied to real world global leadership development. Examples of valuable skills included: strategy building, risk taking, goal making, non-aversion to group conflict, ultraquick decision making, and responsibility delegation (Reeves, Malone, & O'Driscoll, 2008).

According to Reeves, Malone, and O'Driscoll (2008), experiences such as this survey helped IBM to recognize that...

ultimately, the entire workplace may begin to feel more gamelike—with game-inspired interfaces becoming 3-D operating systems for serious work—which could enhance not just leadership but all sorts of collaboration and innovation.

Indeed, a few years after that survey was completed, IBM now leverages this thinking to applications such as their Smart Work 3-D Interactive space for business-related simulation learning (IBM, n.d.). Reeves, Read, and Malone's (2008) research was valuable toward the

framing of this Capstone because the results help bridge the gap between video game leadership and real life application in the workplace.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

According to Conger (1998), “qualitative research is, in reality, the methodology of choice for topics as contextually rich as leadership” (para. 1) development. This paper explores connections between the leadership skill sets required for MMO games and project and program management. Data were gathered through the use of comparative literature reviews, unstructured interviews and artifact evaluations.

To understand how the connection between guild leader and program manager can be made, it is important to understand Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young’s (2005) logic: “an individual’s competence at work cannot be captured in objective lists of work activities and training manuals” (Partington, Pellegrinelli & Young, 2005, p. 89). According to this reasoning, comparative skills between guild leaders and program managers should not be in the form of concrete work details such as “building quality Excel spreadsheets” or “building reliable raiding teams”. Instead, the focus should be on competencies commonly recognized to contribute to leadership success, such as: the ability to broaden the scope beyond initial requirements or the confidence to understand and embody different roles based on current objectives.

This is the same logic underlying the development of advanced “competency models” in leadership development. For example, Naqvi (2009), referring to Human Resources, argues that a “competency mapping system increases the probability of recruiting the right person for the right job, assists the employees in identifying their strengths, weaknesses and talent, besides developing and retaining the high performers” (Competency Mapping, para. 1). Draganidis and Mentzas (2006) complement this with the explanation that “competency based approaches have proved to be a critical tool in many organizational functions, such as workforce and succession

planning and performance appraisal” (Definition, para. 2). If *WoW* guild leadership and professional program management use similar competency models to be effective, the logic offers a sense that with appropriate practice, efficiency in one role provides a strong foundation for learning and adapting for success in the other role.

The Data Identification Journey

Initially the plan for this Capstone paper was to research guild leader management using participant observation methodology. However, the timing of this summer 2012 ethnography project did not coincide with the upcoming *Mists of Pandaria* expansion in *WoW*. Shadowing guild leadership became a difficult endeavor because the majority of raiders either became less active or pursued other challenges in the game while waiting for the new content (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012). A handful of guilds were still actively raiding, but the guilds that were willing to be studied were not interested in moving their raid programs forward. Two guilds were shadowed over the course of a month, but the experience was unproductive with regard to gathering robust data. This decreased raiding activity made participant observations and documentation of raids difficult.

In the first case, the guild broke apart in the middle of the study. In the second case, players stated that their leader was a mediocre player, thus not someone worth studying over the long term as an effective leader. Many players only stayed in this guild for social reasons and did not see the guild as a raiding guild ready for the next expansion. It would be interesting to renew this research path in a few months after guilds begin raiding in the *Mists of Pandaria* expansion.

After realizing that a live observation of interactions would not provide useful data, the next idea was to evaluate recorded interactions. The video sharing site, *YouTube*, provides a great deal of visual history of *WoW* raiding. The newly hatched plan was to review raiding

videos and transcribe interactions between the guild leader and his or her raiders to determine whether examples of leadership skills could be identified through a conversation analyses methodology. Conversation Analyses “is only marginally interested in language as such; its actual object of study is the interactional organization of social activities.... words used in talk are not studied as semantic units, but as products or objects which are designed and used in terms of the activities being negotiated in the talk” (Seedhouse, 2005, p. 3). For further explanation, see “Conversation Analysis Methodology” (Seedhouse, 2005).

In the four hours of initial video research, there were many examples of poor leadership during or after raiding (whitecrow12345, 2008; zoia1221, 2010) but no distinctive, positive, in-game guild leader examples. Examples of poor leadership included: cursing at and/or demeaning players or guild leaders who surprisingly disbanded the raid or guild in frustration in response to a negative situation. It was at this point that the idea of exploring *WoW* official forums arose as a method for examining guild leader interactions. The process of successfully mining this artifact for data will be shared later in this chapter.

After the data were gathered from *WoW* interviews, preliminary interview data from non-gaming project and program managers was gathered to validate the gaming interview methodology. A program manager and project manager from Supply Company, a distribution warehouse in the Maintenance, Repair, and Operations (MRO) domain, were available for interviews. The request was confirmed by upper management in May 2012 and the interviews were scheduled for June 2012. The first interview was with a department manager, whose roles and responsibilities are closely associated with those of a program manager. The second interview was with a supervisor, a position directly below that of a department manager, and more in line with the expectations of a project manager.

These interviews were completed in July, 2012 and were recorded for transcription. Both sessions lasted for approximately 30 minutes each. The base questions were the same as those used for the *WoW* interviewees, but tailored to the language of the organizational context (e.g., manager instead of guild leader). The results were valuable as a preliminary proof of concept of the method, but limited because of the potential biases and small data sets of a convenience sample. More professional program and project managers will have to be interviewed to confirm validity. After careful consideration, the results were made available in Appendix G, but are not discussed further in this research paper.

Research Limitations

It is crucial to show the differences between the research design for this paper and the design that Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) used to gathered data for their research. The triangulation method that Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) used involved an ongoing relationship with program managers including:

shadow them (program manager) over two days observing their behaviour in meetings and at other events; Where possible, in order to gain a qualitative impression of how others perceived the programme manager's competence, and to obtain a wider sample of conceptions of the programme manager's work, interview their immediate superior, their client, and a sample of their peers and members of their programme team (Partington, et al, 2005, p. 89).

When planning the methodologies for data gathering for this paper, the value of Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) triangulation method was considered before creating the existing plan detailed below. While the original strategy to follow the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) participant observations method was a missed opportunity due to timing, the new triangulation process led to valuable discoveries.

This new triangulation process used *WoW* literature, interviews, and forum reviews to gather data for comparison. The mixing of these data types in the triangulation method created

value by validating claims through diverse viewpoints that centralized on similar themes (Olsen, 2004; Creswell & Miller, 2000). For example, from the data gathered from Wankel (2010), the DKP bidding method is an effective tool for motivating players to join raids. The interview sessions took a deeper dive into the use of DKP bidding when guild leaders discussed creating their personalized DKP bidding processes for motivation. The forum review also revealed the use of the DKP bidding for motivation, but discussed problems with applying their personalized methods. As a result, the triangulation process revealed nuances about the DKP bidding method from each methodology and assisted with validity through a systematic paradigm approach (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Reliability gained by the trustworthiness of the repeated data (Golafshani, 2003) was also apparent.

In addition to this personal researcher lens for data gathering, validity procedures also followed two additional paths: the perspective of those involved in the research and the perspective of people external to the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). By requesting that the interviewees review the concluding analysis of their interview data, validation was gained through “how accurately participants’ realities were represented in the final account” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125). People external to the study were also asked to review the data. Feedback was requested from faculty at the University of Pennsylvania with expertise relating to the research question. Creswell and Miller (2000) state that “reviewers not affiliated with the project may help establish validity as well as various readers for whom the account is written” (p. 125). Below Table 11 provides a synthesis of the lenses and validation procedures in place (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Table 11. Creswell and Miller's (2000) Data Validation Examples

Paradigm Lens	Systematic Paradigm
Lens of the Researcher	Triangulation
Lens of Study Participants	Member checking
Lens of People External to Study (Reviewers, Readers)	The audit trail

Multiple roadmaps led to data collection that netted similar results. Different lenses added validity to the process and the results gathered.

Comparative Literature Analysis of Leadership Scenarios

Most academic studies provide a wide range of characteristics, with few overlapping skills. To better evaluate the research question, the overlapping skills of this pilot study needed to be identified as a way to look for consistency. The decision was made to map the overlapping skills and characteristics presented by Wankel (2010) and Reeves and Read (2009) to the attributes provided in the paper by Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005). The Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model was used for comparison because it provides the attributes and maturity levels based on program manager attributes. This comparison uses a point-by-point process to evaluate the attributes that overlap between the *WoW* data sources (Wankel, 2010; Reeves & Read, 2009) and Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) program management competency model.

Subject and Methods for Interview Analysis

Two *WoW* Subject Matter Experts and six *WoW* program and project managers were interviewed. These eight people were identified via the social networking site, *FaceBook*. A prerequisite for selection was that interviewees either had to be a former or a current raid leader or guild leader. These criteria ensured that interviewees would have a higher level of

understanding of the guild's organizational structure as was reasoned by Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) leadership framework: "people who held higher level conceptions were able to express not only those higher level conceptions but also lower level conceptions" (p. 92).

Where the interviewee held both raid leader and guild leader roles at different points in time, the request was made for the interviewee to choose one role and use the experiences from that role for answering all further questions. The purpose of this request was two-fold: interview questions needed to be framed accordingly and confusion needed to be avoided when transcribing interview anecdotes for later review. The structured questions used during the interview process are available in Appendices D, E, and F. The list of interviewees is available in Table 12.

Table 12. Interview List

Interview Subjects for the Capstone Research		Perspective of Data for WoW			Skype, Phone, or In Person
Methodology Identification	Nature of Program	Programme Manager	Project Manager	Length of Interview	
Guild Interview 1	Podis' Guild Experience		Yes	23 minutes	In Person
Guild Interview 2	Campa's Guild Experience	Yes		30 minutes	Skype
Guild Interview 3	Arkonis' Guild Experience	Yes		15 minutes	Skype
Guild Interview 4	Skooney's Guild Experience		Yes	45 minutes	Skype
Guild Interview 5	Dizkord's Guild Experience		Yes	20 minutes (approx)	Phone
Guild Interview 6	Justiniano's Guild Experience	Yes		43 minutes	Skype
SME Interview 1	Justin's Game Play (SME)	Yes		1 hr 21 minutes	Skype
SME Interview 2	James' Game Play (SME)		Yes	57 minutes	In Person

The overall interview approach controlled for data consistency beginning with a structured list of interview questions for people who were independently interviewed. Given the personal experience of the interviewer as a *WoW* guild leader, the structured interview questions

were shared with the research advisor prior to starting the interviews to avoid wording that inadvertently influenced the data sources.

After the session, interviewees were also asked to avoid disclosing information, including the theme of the questions, to other possible interviewees. Interviewees were later asked to review and approve information gathered from his or her session in order to ensure validity of interview transcripts. In all but the SME reviews, the random reviews were met with acceptance and endorsement. In the SME reviews, feedback was provided by one SME in regard to some of the verbs used. The issue was resolved immediately through a step-by-step evaluation of all the SME-quoted material by both SMEs independently.

SME Interviews

Each interview was completed separately as a way to ensure the overlapping themes were independently provided without influence from the other SME. The first interviews were completed on June 24th, 2012 and focused on an overview of guild structures, how the game changed in each expansion, and how guild dynamics were transformed by the expansions. A subsequent interview became necessary once the realization was made that the research would go in the direction of the minority “hardcore” group of *WotLK* and *Cataclysm* players. These second interviews occurred on August 15th and 16th.

Program and Project Manager Interviews

Those who were raid leaders were grouped into the Project Manager category and were asked questions about their favorite and least favorite guild leaders in *WoW*. They were also asked about how the guild leader provided support for the raids through the use of advice or alternate assistance options. Those who were guild leaders were grouped into the Program Manager category and were asked questions along the theme of skills necessary to be a good

guild leader, how good guild leaders provided support to their raid leader, and how they differed from those who were perceived to be bad guild leaders. The perception of good and bad leaders was used as an uncomplicated way to gather data for the wide range of attributes and maturity levels that one would find among all guild leaders. This is a similar phenomenography approach to that used by Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) to create their competency model.

Interview sessions occurred in one of three ways: in person, via the computer program *Skype*, or over the telephone. The interviews were conducted throughout the months of June and July, 2012. The results of the interviews were transcribed and mapped to the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model of attributes and maturity level(s). An example of this mapping process is as follows in Table 13:

Table 13. Example of Interview Mapping Process

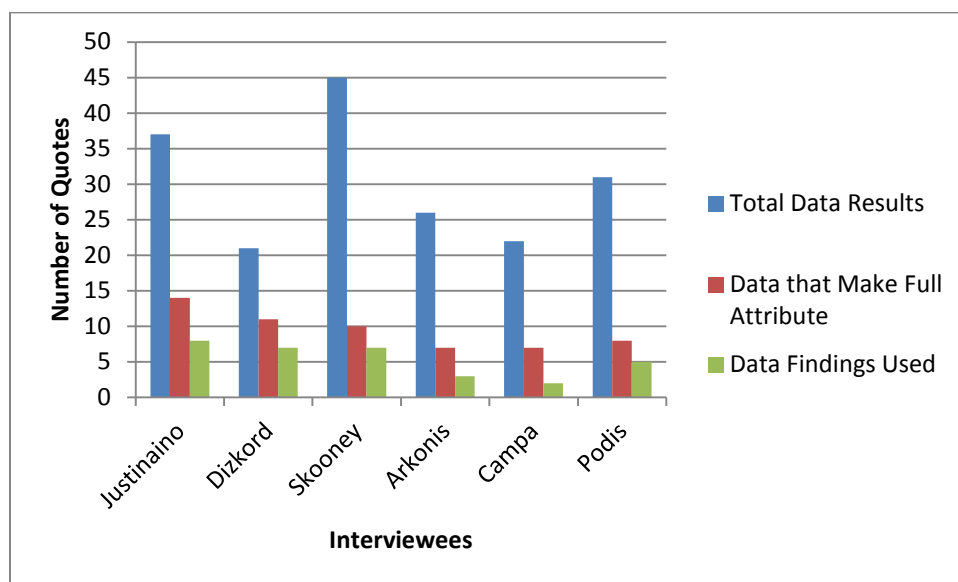
Example Sentence	Breakdown of Sentence	Attributes Found	Maturity Level
He understood that people raid for entertainment rewards, not tangible assets, so he knew that everyone had a different definition of fun and he was very good at looking at the whole picture for how to develop a person and where to fit them into the guild.	People raid for entertainment	Approach to F2F communication	3
	Everyone has different definitons of fun	Approach to F2F communication	3
	Looks at whole picture	Adaptive Intent	4
	Develop a person	Expectations of others	3 and/or 4
	Where to fit them into the guild	Expectations of others	3 and/or 4

A primary objective of the mapping process was to see how frequently each attribute and maturity level was spontaneously mentioned before deciding which results to select for the interview analysis.

It is important to note here that Agar (1986) defined the term, “strip” as the many kinds of data gathered during ethnographic research, including: interview, textual, and observational data. Six interviews may seem like a small sample size, until one recognizes that the focus of this

research was on the 182 data “strips” gathered for the research evaluation process (See Table 14) and on the 363 total data strips gathered among all methodologies.

Table 14. Data Samples Gathered From *WoW* Guild Interviews

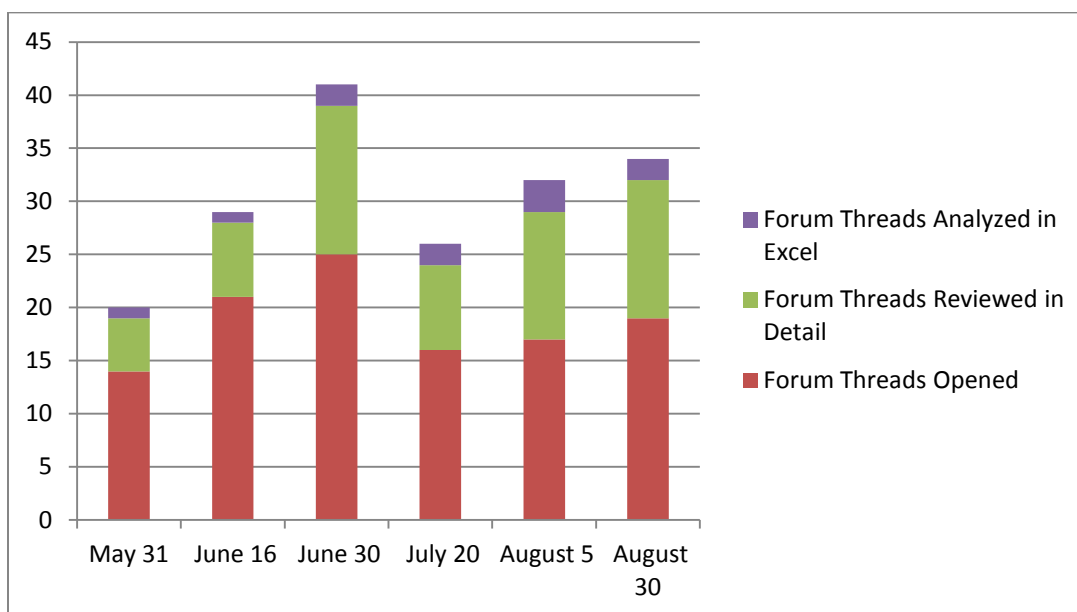


Artifact Analysis

Using a phenomenographic approach, artifacts were gathered from the *WoW Raid and Guild Leadership* forums, described by Blizzard Entertainment as the formal location to: “discuss raid and guild management, guild recruiting practices, and more from experienced and budding raid and guild leaders alike” (Blizzard Entertainment, Inc, 2012). This internet location became an option for research after exhausting the original artifact location, *YouTube*. Approximately 28 hours was spent reading through 59 forum threads in detail, paying particular attention to topics that relate to guild leadership. The objectives were: to better understand the attributes that guild leaders were using to deal with current events, and the attributes used to prepare for governance changes to guilds (raiding program) and projects (raids) in the upcoming

expansion. Table 15 provides a summary list of the forum threads considered for use in this research.

Table 15. A Chart of the Artifact Review Process



The forum review was designed to identify attributes that guild leadership required by capturing gaming strategies that were developed as governance changes were considered. Data were gathered from the forums in six 4-hour visits over the course of four months. A focus was placed on topics that would otherwise be absent from this research. The forum selection criteria included the requirement that all documented repliers must be guild leaders of raiding guilds. The first three guild leaders were randomly chosen from responses to a topic, or forum thread, relating to guild leadership.

The analysis of each forum post or message included: the message title; the author of the original message, or OP; the author of the reply; the date of the reply and whether the message was a problem or a response; what attributes and maturity levels were displayed; and a short

description of the messages to use for research comparison. Table 16 is a sample from the Excel data spreadsheet for this forum review. A similar review was completed for each topic analyzed.

Table 16. Excel Spreadsheet of Forum Review for One Topic

Message Title	OP	Replier	Date	Prob or Res	Attributes	# of Attributes	Level	Issue
Guild repairs...	Partyongarth		19-Jun	P	S2/S3/O1/S4 /E7/E3/O5	7	3,3,3,2,4,1,1	Committed to the goals of the stakeholders paying repairs (3)/Flexible approach to how to handle excess gold in guild bank (3)/Interested in helping out team but obviously prepared to drive hard (3), Obviously attempting to fill multiple roles - guild leader, reward giver but is unsure of himself right now (2)/aware of need to give people time to settle into guild before receiving full benefits (4)/Gkick if complain too much (1)/Expects players to follow the rules (1)
		Jakethetank	19-Jun	R	E4/O4/E6/E1 /E8	5	3,1,2,4,3	Communicate to new recruits what the vision is and where they fit (3)/Questions new recruit to see where they fit (1)/Cost benefit analysis - what else would you do with that gold reserve? (2)/Adapts guild bank to meet the needs of the guild/A way to fix the gripes in gchat (3)
		Hespler	19-Jun	R	E1/E8/O2/ O2	4	1,1,2,1	Gives people same amount regardless of rank worked in past will work now (1)/ All dependent on what is in the guild bank (1)/ No special privileges (2)/ Kick that douche (1)
		Nebliina	19-Jun	R	E6/S1/O5/ O1/E8	5	4,1,2,3,2	Large, multipurpose guild (4)/Detailed plan for gold distribution (1)/Bank running low so loot those mobs!(2)/Shares whats in the bank but prepared to ask for more (3)/ Need more moniez! (2)

The Research Steps

This research process provided many *WoW* leadership examples of the 17 attributes and four maturity levels described in the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) competency model. In total, 363 possible examples were identified through field work research to evaluate for further inclusion. These examples were identified by isolating key words that were either in the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model or that could be related to words in their model. For example, three *WoW* interviews used the word “detached” to describe a guild leader.

These quotes were matched with Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) first maturity level of the Emotional Attachment attribute which states "Detached, Focused" as the description.

Each interview was examined and mapped for the apparent and subtle attributes and maturity levels shared within the interviews segments. For example, Skooney (See Appendix C) said:









A good guild leader needs to be adaptive and have malleability. When you see a problem, you can't look at it with a singular mindset. You have to consider that there may be multiple solutions to the same problem and apply different strategies to see what works best (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

This quote was mapped to the third maturity level of the Disposition for Action attribute defined as: "Experimental, reflective; Flexible approach to programme rules and procedures" (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005). This connection was identified through the words Skooney used: multiple solutions, being adaptive, and having malleability are all examples of being "experimental"; apply different strategies relates to being "reflective" and using past results to create new "programme rules and procedure" to see what works best. Table 17 below presents the map of Skooney's interview responses.

It is important to note that this quote was also used as an effective example of the fourth maturity level for Adaptive Intent: "Adapt the environment to suit the purpose" (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005). In the mapping step, attribute examples often overlapped with each other or complemented each other, showing that same connectivity between the attributes that made Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) data analysis process so "messy" (p. 90). Because leadership is complex, doing it well often requires the integrated use of different leadership competencies to address a single issue or situation that emerges within a program. Thus, leaders must be good at the simultaneous use of multiple leadership

competencies to address truly complex issues. Many data findings from this research demonstrated the use of multiple competencies which supports Pellegrinelli's (2002) research.

Table 17. Partial Mapping of Skooney's Interview to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) Model

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
S1. Granularity of Focus				
S2. Emotional Attachment				
S3. Disposition for Action				
S4. Approach to Role Plurality				

The next step was a comparison of all the examples across all the methodologies to the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model. A ranking system, explained in greater detail below, was in place to evaluate the best match of each example to the description of the maturity level. For those examples that ranked the same, the anticipated level of ease in explaining the information to the reader in a non-technical way was used to break the tie. An example of the comparison process is provided in Table 18.

Table 18. Maturity Level Comparison

Attribute: Adaptive Intent		
Maturity Level: 3		
Maturity Description: "Adapts environment to suit self"		
Campa (interview)	Reeves & Read (literature)	Nandianya (forums)
I don't give specific tips though - that's the job of the class leader. They give tips. Set up a structure so the smartest person for the job will do that function for you and your guild (Guild hierarchy creation to meet personal interests)	The opportunity to closely align personal and group goals is a central premise of allying game ideas in the workplace, and this is accomplished without real money (DKP distribution to meet personal goals)	Perhaps post on your realm forums a really brief apology to those that were kicked and inform them that they should PM you or another for a reinvite. I imagine there are some key members that you can explicitly seek out (Using the forums to meet personal needs)

Above are three examples for the third maturity level of the attribute Adaptive Intent. This attribute requires that the person "adapts environment to suit self." In guild leader Campa's interview, (See Appendix C) he created a clear hierarchy system that was adapted to suit his personal interests. He did not want to play the role of class leader, a resident SME in one of 10 different styles of *WoW* game play, so he created a rank in the guild for people who would fill that role for him. Meanwhile, Read and Reeves (2009, p. 168) provided a description about the use of the in-game bartering process, DKP, as a way to motivate players to do what the guild leader wanted. The last example was forum advice that guild leader Nandianya, introduced in the forum review section, provided to a guild leader who lost guild members after an argument with another guild member. She suggested the use of the realm forums and private messaging system in the game as a way to adapt the environment to suit the personal purpose of reclaiming the guild.

These three examples were given numerical value based on how closely each illustration related to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) maturity level descriptions. This ranking method was constructed through subjective heuristics and was based on how the context, content, and value of the comment compared to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) wording for the maturity level of a particular attribute. Five questions were used to create the ranking.

1. Does the context of the quote or paraphrase fit contextually with the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model?
2. Does the content fit with the Partington model?
3. Does this quote/paraphrase add significance to the research question?
4. Do terms/phrases/words match or relate to the Partington model?
5. Does this quote fit in with or create a theme for the attribute?

On a scale of 0-5, Campa's example scored a 4; Reeves and Read's example was 3; and Nandianya's example was 2.

Six attribute examples were gathered from the comparative literature review methodology, seven attribute examples from the interview methodology, and four attributes examples from the forum review methodology. The next step was to present these findings in a way that revealed the attribute similarities between raiding guild leaders and professional program managers using the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model as the foundation. These findings are described in Chapter 4.

Guild Leader Advice Evaluation

Another consideration that occurred while completing research was the degree to which the quality of the advice provided by guild leaders to other guild leaders of the *WoW* community in the *WoW* forums had any relation to guild progression. Advice in this context was defined as the number of attributes and levels of maturity generated from each message. The data collection process only included guild leaders on the *WoW* forums whose information was usable via the

previously explained research steps and ranking process: Pessimist, Solaeris, Virtutis, Galifianakis, Tyrnyx, Hudiddytoo, Nandianya, Partyongarth, Jakethetank, Hespler, Koica, and Nebliina.

The *WoW* database was available to assess how progressive the guilds of these guild leaders were. The overall focus was on the guild achievements that Blizzard Entertainment tracks, paying special attention to the raids relating to the current expansion, *Cataclysm*. These raids were popular at the time of this study because they provided the best rewards and thus held the greatest incentive for the average guild. Because guilds also gain achievements for completing older raid content as a group and guild leaders need to follow the same preparation guidelines, those statistics were included as well. An average of these raid percentages was created and evaluated against the average maturity level of guild leader advice. Chapter 4 will provide the results of this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Comparative Literature Analysis of Leadership Scenarios

Descriptions of *WoW* leadership scenarios were collected from Reeves and Read's (2009) and Wankel's (2010) studies. Through a comparative analysis process, the selected examples spanned the entire range of maturity levels from six of Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) attributes. This section provides a review the six attributes of the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model that were deemed the most relevant for explaining the leadership incidents gathered from Reeves and Read (2010) and Wankel (2009).

Relationship between self and work – Granularity of Focus

As shown in Table 19, "Granularity of Focus" ranges in maturity from the smallest scope of a detailed plan; to a summary plan for the second maturity level; to a summary plan that involves stakeholders in the third maturity level; to the highest maturity level that includes a summary plan with stakeholders coupled with future and external considerations. Each level of maturity in an attribute, in this case "Granularity of Focus," shows an improvement to the program manager's skill set.

Table 19. Granularity of Focus

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Well-planned detail	Summary plan and broad understanding of internal impact outside project	Level 2 plus personal involvement in selected detail when deemed necessary, for stakeholder benefits	Level 3 plus strong future orientation and understanding of external context
WoW examples	Details for creating and managing a raid program strategy	Summary plan of what boss encounters are on the raid schedule	Complete performance reviews to ensure stakeholder benefits are met - and know the summary plan	Alter raid programs in anticipation of Blizzard changes, while doing performance reviews, and summary plan

The maturity levels of the attribute “Granularity of Focus” seem applicable to *WoW* guild leadership, specifically in relation to the nuances of the raiding program. The most relevant focus for this attribute exists within the average raiding project when planning the strategy.

The raid leader handles the well-planned details connected to the first maturity level (Reeves & Read, 2009). In small or new guilds, this raid leader is likely to be the guild leader (Wankel, 2010). At the second maturity level, the guild leader has the requirement to “know the boss’s attacks, the nuances of the encounter, and the role he or she is expected to play in the raid’s planned strategy” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 42). If the roles of guild leader and raid leader are separated, the guild leader does not have to know the exact strategy of the raid, but should have the organizational awareness to judge if the raid leader is performing adequately in his or her role (Wankel, 2010). In other words, the guild leader must have a summary plan.

Moving up the scale of maturity, as stated by Wankel (2010), a guild leader’s job “is to achieve the goals of the stakeholders” (p.127). Similar to an organization’s collective interest in a business program’s success, a guild has a collective interest in a raiding program’s progression. For the effective guild leader, this requires regular performance reviews of raiders to justify their continued selection on the PvE team (Reeves & Read, 2009; Wankel, 2010). Performance reviews occur through a review of a player’s contributions and commitments to the raiding program via in-game add-on programs that provide relevant statistical data. If a player does not provide the same quality and quantity of work as other players on the team, his or her spot on future raids may be questioned. This process is equivalent to the program manager’s commitment to have “personal involvement in selected details when deemed necessary for

stakeholder benefit” (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005, p. 91). This commitment is a requirement for the third maturity level.

At the highest level, this attribute, “Granularity of Focus” stresses on the future of the program and the organization. Acting in the position of governance, Blizzard Entertainment can alter the number of players who constitute a raid – or make any other changes to the game they deem fit (Wankel, 2010). Wankel (2010) shared an anecdote about how he, as an active guild leader, altered his raiding program in advance because of anticipated changes by Blizzard. By knowing the future plans of governance, he was capable of transitioning his guild and policies beforehand to maintain a successful raiding program (Wankel, 2010). This is a prime example of a guild leader who had the highest “Granularity of Focus” maturity level. He exhibited the right level of “concern for [the] development of strategic capabilities” (Partington, Pellegrinelli & Young, 2005, p. 92) to build on top of a stakeholder-focused summary plan.

Relationship between self and others – Relationship with Team

In Table 20, the maturity levels of this attribute advances from the role of being a supportive leader, to a leader who uses a need to know approach, to a social and inclusive leader who can drive the program forward by making unpopular decisions to the inspirational leader who uses charisma and credibility to alter a team member’s habits for the good of the program.

Table 20. Relationship with Team

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Supportive and responsive to requests for help	Seeks detachment; uses need to know approach to interactions	Social, inclusive, paternal, but prepared to drive hard	Confidence-inspiring leader with charisma and credibility who can get people to modify their natural behavior
WoW examples	Guild leaders set aside predetermined times to meet with guild members about personal or raid issues	Used need to know approach to focus efforts on strategy at raid time. Detachment related to choosing the best person to handle the strategic explanation	Made unpopular decisions and/or compromises to move the raid program forward	Requested permanent playstyle changes for the betterment of the raid

A guild leader needs a strong rapport with his or her guild to progress. This is because a guild leader requires a group of 9-39 additional guild members who have the skill and desire to complete the same raid on the same day at the same time and who are willing to agree on the same terms for rewards for effort and successful completion. Unexpected issues may arise that cause the leader to drive hard toward the goal. This may include asking players to handle additional tasks, change to different schedules, or sit out of the raid altogether for a multitude of reasons. The full spectrum of maturity levels for the “Relationship with Team” attribute is illustrated by a guild leader who can gradually create an effective and continually participating raiding team.

Starting with the first level, Reeves and Read (2009) discussed supportive and responsive guild leaders who set aside predetermined times separate from raiding activities to provide help to guild members. Examples included helping out lower level guild members with difficult tasks or having in-game meetings to discuss personal or guild-related matters, such as raid schedule problems or new officer appointments.

Guild leaders usually delegate the raid leader position to someone who is prepared to handle the responsibility of leading a raid (Wankel, 2010). The expectation is that the raid leader

will provide the strategic information on a need to know basis to those who will be in the raid group. Reeves and Read (2009) took a deep dive into this topic when they discussed a particular raider, Solia, and her active role “explaining to the rest of the raid the ability of each boss they encounter before they attempt them, as well as to walk each person through what his or her job will be during the encounter” (p. 57-58). The guild leader could have handled this responsibility, but instead remained detached and allowed Solia to use her strength as the most experienced raider (Reeves & Read, 2009) to benefit the team. This is an example of a guild leader who used the second maturity level for the “Relationship with Team” attribute to build rapport.

Moving up the maturity levels, Reeves and Read (2009) illustrated the third maturity level in this direct quote from a guild leader: “The toughest thing about being a guild leader is maintain relationships with all of your members on a personal level, and realizing that no matter what, you’re not going to please everybody” (p. 158). There always comes a time when a social and inclusive guild leader has to make an unpopular decision or a compromise to move a guild forward in raid progression (Wankel, 2010). For example, a player who wants to stand back and shoot magic missiles during the raid may be asked to provide assistance to the melee group, also known as close-ranged combat, against a boss combat instead. A compromise might be that the magic missile player earn extra DKP as an incentive for temporarily playing a role he or she does not want to play.

As the highest level, the charismatic and confidence-inspiring leader should show this maturity level in even the smallest raiding programs of the *BC*, *WotLK*, and *Cataclysm* expansions. With only 10 players allowed to enter these raids, players are often asked to switch the composition of their play style in order to achieve a greater probability of success within the expansion based strategy (Wankel, 2010). Going back to the example of the player who wanted

to stand back and shoot magic missiles, that player might not be confident in that new role, but eventually, a confidence-inspiring leader with this higher maturity level for “Relationship with Team” can convince the person to use these two play styles interchangeably for the betterment of all stakeholders (Wankel, 2010).

Relationship between self and others – Approach to Conflict and Divergence

As seen in Table 21, the first maturity level of the attribute “Approach to Conflict and Divergence” involves a non-legitimate approach to conflict and divergence through the use of a procedural solution. A procedural solution for the second maturity level of “Approach to Conflict and Divergence” involves creating and implementing action plans and policies that are deemed legitimate by the guild. The third maturity level focuses on negotiated solutions with a procedural approach and extends into the fourth maturity level that looks for creative solutions through subtle facilitation.

Table 21. Approach to Conflict and Divergence

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Not considered legitimate - seeks procedural solution	Considered legitimate - seeks procedural solution	Considered legitimate - seeks negotiated solution	Encourages creative solution through subtle facilitation
WoW examples	Guild leader created an alternative character just to avoid conflicts	Created plan of action to handle conflicts in future	Completed performance reviews and discussed alternative methods for improvement	Created new raid teams to cater to both the casual and hardcore player bases

When people of so many demographics join together to complete a goal, there will be conflict and divergence. Conflict may be between players, between raiders and leadership, or among leaders. Procedural solutions are routine responses that typically fall in line with guild policies agreed upon by guild members. Negotiated solutions are usually not considered as far in

advance. The process of finding these solutions may happen behind closed doors or in a group meeting. Creative solutions are usually applied as the conflict occurs to prevent key players from leaving the raid group or guild. Subtle facilitation avoids a blowup and diffuses the tension.

In one interview by Reeves and Read (2009), a player discussed the ups and downs of guild leadership. At one point s/he stated: “There is an awful lot of handholding and personal conflict resolution that you have to do.... I knew it was time to change when I found myself creating an alt (alternative character) just to play without guild headaches” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 157). In this example, the guild leader exhibited a response that was not legitimate. In this person’s “Approach to Conflict and Divergence,” the player opted to ignore the responsibility of leadership by playing the game as a secret character who was not affiliated with his or her guild position (Reeves & Read, 2009).

Wankel (2010) noted, “If an organization is to be maximized, the leadership must create a specific plan of action and communicate it down to each layer of individuals so that it can be executed” (p. 147). So when that reward drops after a raid and two players hold the same claim over it through the DKP process, a procedural solution that everyone was aware of should be in place as a way to overcome conflict and avoid drama.

For the third maturity level of “Approach to Conflict and Divergence,” Reeves and Read (2009) provided an example of a legitimately negotiated solution through an anecdote about a guild leader had to make a decision based on the results of a recent raid. In this illustration, an officer wanted to kick an underperforming raider out of the guild. Removing the person from the guild would have been the easiest solution but “[t]he leader said a better method would be to first make sure that the player was aware of his mistakes and had a chance to fix his poor play” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 158). This is just one example of many legitimate

negotiated conflict resolutions that an effective guild leader will be a part of to sustain a raiding guild (Reeves & Read, 2009; Wankel, 2010). Other examples include negotiating the distribution of loot or the rotation of players onto the raiding roster in a way that is perceived as legitimate by the group (Wankel, 2010).

Finally, Wankel (2010) provided a detailed account of the highest maturity level for “Approach to Conflict and Divergence,” when he discussed a guild leader who was skilled at encouraging a creative solution through subtle facilitation. When Blizzard Entertainment reduced the raid size from 40 players to 25 players, two player bases emerged – the “casual” and the “hardcore,” as uncovered in a survey by Debeauvais, Nardi, Schiano, Ducheneaut, and Yee (2010).

To accommodate these two new styles of raiding, Wankel’s (2010) guild leader explored the option of recruiting five new players into the raiding roster to create three new 10-player raids. The first raid group was reorganized to be “hardcore” as defined in the survey with progression as their top priority and socialization as a secondary. The third raid group was restructured as a “casual” group that deemed socializing with friends to be the primary objective with progression happening at a much slower pace. The second group fit in an “in-between” category (Wankel, 2010). The result was this creative 3-group solution through subtle facilitation that provided the majority of players with a resolution that met their individualized goals (Wankel, 2010).

Relationship between self and others – Expectations of Others

The four maturity levels of the “Expectations of Others” attribute start with a basic expectation for contracted effort. The second maturity level pushes for special effort when necessary. Beyond that is the third maturity level which looks for particular special effort

through the exploitation of an individual’s talents. The highest attribute then goes beyond exploiting to extend a player’s talent. All these maturity levels are visible in Table 22 below.

Table 22. Expectations of Others

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Expects contracted effort	Expects special effort when required	Exploits individuals' talents	Extends individuals' talents
WoW examples	Contracted effort was the only way that a raid program can run	Special effort was needed for progression: fire gear for Molten Core raid project	Used DKP as an incentive to get people to work hard	Chose people to fill special roles in the guild. Taught them skills related to the function if the person did well at the basic level

The most valuable way to explain the application of this attribute is to consider what each level provided to a raid group in terms of talent. The first maturity level for the “Expectation of Others” attribute involves a guild leader who looks to simply fill the raid with any player who would join and fulfill the basic operating agreements and process of the guild and raids. The second maturity builds on that to find players who can provide that special effort that can mean the difference between success and failure. The exploitation of others is sometimes a necessary tactic to find additional people who are capable of taking on job duties that a guild leader is either weak at or does not have time to complete. The highest maturity level for “Expectation of Others” looks to extend the talent of others. When the exploited person is effective at his or her new job duty, extending the talent by providing quality feedback can make the difference between a willing participant for coaching and future development or a failed experiment. The more talented players a guild leader can maintain, the greater likelihood the guild has toward progressing in raid content.

Every guild leader that runs a raiding guild expects contracted effort from those on the raiding roster (Wankel, 2010; Reeves & Read, 2009). This is the first level of the “Expectations of Others” attribute available shown in Table 22. Contracted effort is the only way that a guild can maintain a raiding program (Wankel, 2010). Special effort, however, is often needed for progression. As an example of this second maturity level, one particular raid in *Vanilla WoW* “was famous for requiring players to collect a special set of fire-resistant gear in order to survive” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 48). To collect this set of gear, players of a guild often banded together to purchase, gather, or craft the material needed (Reeves & Read, 2009), showing a special effort to meet the program goals.

Exploiting the talents of the individual is the description of the third maturity level for “Expectation of Others.” In *WoW*, the DKP process (see appendix for a description of this loot distribution method) offers a way for a guild leader to accomplish this talent exploitation. DKP can “provide explicit incentives for this that might otherwise only be done out of loyalty or bartered quid pro quo” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 168). By offering a player additional DKP, a guild leader can effectively request many things from an otherwise unwilling raider (Reeves & Read, 2009). The charismatic, confidence-inspiring guild leader noted earlier in “Relationship with Team” might find the DKP incentive an effective short cut to motivating the person such as the one who wanted to use magic missiles instead of playing that necessary melee role.

Beyond exploitation is the ability to extend a player’s talents for the benefit of that player and the guild. This is the highest level one can accomplish in this “Expectation of Others” attribute. Examples of talent extension include providing feedback to players who want to be raid leaders, DKP trackers, class leaders, website builders, or recruitment officers for the betterment of all stakeholders (Reeves & Read, 2009). Every typical *WoW* guild has a “complex officer

system in which responsibilities are assigned to specific people” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 52). Guild leaders have the power to choose who will play these critical roles; wisely choosing a person with a natural talent for some of these roles can be the tipping point that turns an average guild into a top endgame guild (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

Relationship between self and programme environment – Approach to Risk

The definition of risk in this context is a negative consequence of a decision. Table 23, illustrates Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young’s (2005) maturity levels relating to risk. To begin, the first maturity level focuses on managing out the internal risks of the guild. From there, the second maturity level extends to include all risks. The third maturity level includes contingency plans for risks and the highest maturity level states that the person should be ready for the consequences of failure.

Table 23. Approach to Risk

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Analyze, report, monitor. Manage out internal risks	Attempt to manage out all risks	Prepare extreme contingency	Be ready for consequences of failure
WoW examples	Internal risks included: Managing the raid attendee list and handling inept players	External risks included: Having an awareness when other top guilds attempt to poach top players	Used DKP as an extreme contingency plan to prepare for a tough night in the raid program	Provided the right attitude to prepare the group for failure

When looking at this “Approach to Risk,” the first maturity level is separated from the second maturity level by the binding word internal. Therefore, the understanding is that the management approach is the same but one looks internally and the other looks at both internal and external risks to the guild’s raid program. Extreme contingency plans are usually brief and

cover what to do when specific players die during a raid. More often than not, a guild leader is more prepared for the consequences of failure than is prepared with a contingency plan. How a guild leader prepares for risks can make or break the progress of a raiding guild.

An average guild leader has many internal risks to consider prior to raiding. Examples include: proactively managing the raid attendee list to avoid an understaffed raid event, handling players who are inept in their raid assignments, and creating a solid plan for loot distribution to avoid conflict among players (Wankel, 2010). “Managing out all risks” is what a guild leader with the second maturity level for “Approach to Risk” attempts to do in Risk Management. Additional risks to consider include: competitive guild attempts to poach a top performer or the ever-changing content created by Blizzard Entertainment (Wankel, 2010). “Leaders need to be calm and reasoned in their approach and need to use logic, strategy, and positive reinforcement as their primary weapons” (Wankel, 2010, p. 94) when dealing with risks.

Many times, an extreme contingency plan is in place to mitigate a raid wipe, which is “the term for a failed attempt by the raid group to defeat the current obstacle” (Wankel, 2010, p. 14). One contingency plan is to proffer additional DKP or other incentives as motivation to the players on nights when the guild leader knows the raid will be difficult (Reeves & Read, 2009). Wankel (2010) explained one scenario for how to handle DKP as an extreme contingency plan: “reward [raiders] with DKP purely for attending the raid, regardless of whether or not any bosses were defeated. DKP [is] earned for time spent, rather than successful performance” (p. 204). This would be an example of a guild leader who has the third maturity level, preparing for an extreme contingency in his or her “Approach to Risk.” However, preparing for an extreme contingency plan does not necessarily ensure a cooperative reaction by the team.

The highest maturity level of the “Approach to Risk” attribute ideally receives that cooperative result. Reeves and Read (2009) provided an example of a guild that was prepared for the consequences of failure:

We watched seven guild members attempt to get their whole team across a lake protected by a gruesome monster. A brief chat yielded an initial strategy, but the conversation was short. Everyone was comfortable with the high likelihood of failure. Why? Death to their characters did occur. But that was quickly followed by ‘Let’s try that again,’ and ‘This time no one step on the protruding stones’ (p. 165).

A player needs to feel rewarded for his or her efforts while at the same time believing that he or she is not “a member of a guild that always wipes” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 165). Guild leaders with that highest maturity level for “Approach to Risk” can sustain a culture of learning from failure (J. Agnes, personal communication, June 24, 2012; J. Colvin, personal communication, June 24, 2012).

Relationship between self and programme environment –Face to Face Communications

In Table 24, the attribute “Approach to Face to Face Communication” uses facts as the foundation for communication. The first maturity level looks to report facts objectively and consistently. The second maturity level for “Approach to Face to Face Communication” connects analysis and opinion-making to the facts. The third maturity level then adds a vision gained from the analysis and opinions that can be shared in a way that is sensitive to the audience. The highest maturity level can use everything from the previous maturity levels and incorporate cultural sensitivity to the results.

Table 24. Approach to Face to Face Communications

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Report objective facts in consistent style	Provide analysis and opinions in consistent style	Level 2 plus sell vision of outcome in style more sensitive to audience	Level 3 plus cultural sensitivity
WoW examples	The use of add-ons to report facts	Be consistent or raid programs won't last long	Use of the hardcore or casual vision to recruit	Considered organizational and personal culture issues when selling the vision

One of the key distinctions relating to this attribute is that the “Approach to Face to Face Communications” attribute cannot be truly face to face in *WoW*. Instead, there is a critical virtual element that *WoW* guild leaders use to their advantage in face to face communication. Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) may find value in analyzing the future of communication in the professional program management realm.

Thanks to the many in-game tools, called add-ons, which *WoW* players are able to create and use, the first maturity level is simple to pursue in a raiding program. Any player need only click a button and all the facts from the raid are available. To have the second maturity level of “Approach to Face to Face Communications,” a guild leader needs to provide analysis and opinions in a consistent style, which is difficult and may require conversations with players or other leaders in the guild before forming and exercising judgment. The third maturity level builds on the second maturity level and includes a vision – the basic vision for any guild leader of a raiding guild is progression. Any analysis of facts will include an explanation of how the facts impact the vision of progression. The highest maturity level adds the element of cultural sensitivity which is an important consideration when managing a guild of 50 or more players.

In this context, a guild’s “culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members” (Goodenough, 1964, p. 36). The chief

organizational culture consideration involves the “casual” versus “hardcore” balance (Debeauvais, et. al, 2010) of the player base. As a result, “player behaviors and group behaviors [vary] due to game goals, personal preferences, and player awareness, even in the relatively formal barracks-like raiding guilds” (Williams, Ducheneaut, Xiong, Zhang, Yee, & Nickell, 2006, p. 357). According to Williams, et. al, (2006), because of this cultural influence, guild leaders deal with “culture shock” when two or more guilds merge together because guilds have unique organizational cultures.

To meet the needs of the first maturity level for “Approach to Face to Face Communications,” “players and leaders learn to trust game metrics, in part because it is difficult to cheat. It’s important for gamers to know that the data are objective and less susceptible to social influence” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 170). The trick is to be able to analyze those facts in a way that is consistent and fair for everyone – which is the objective of the second maturity level for “Approach to Face to Face Communications.” Often, if this maturity level does not prevail, a raiding program will not last long; this is because players tend to seek out guild leaders who are perceived as consistent with his or her discipline of raiding management (Wankel, 2010).

To obtain the third maturity level, the vision of the raiding program needs to be agreed upon by all on the raiding roster.

The guild leadership is responsible for setting the structure of the guild and the raid along with what type of image it wants for its guild. Perhaps more importantly than setting that structure, the guild leadership needs to be able to communicate it to the game community so that it can recruit like-minded individuals (Wankel, 2010, p. 39).

The vision can focus on any style of raiding from “casual” to “hardcore” or cater to that large “in-between” crowd. A guild leader with this maturity level can clearly explain what the vision is

for the guild and plan the recruitment process according to that objective. If the vision and recruitment strategy do not align, the raiding program will not last (Wankel, 2010).

Adding cultural sensitivity to the attributes of the guild leader is the fourth maturity level for “Approach to Face to Face Communications.” Reeves and Read (2009) provided a snippet of the complexity that cultural sensitivity entails through an interview session with a guild leader: “The toughest thing about being a guild leader for me was making the hard decisions while dealing with people of multiple ages, ethnicities and time zones” (p. 158). Guild leaders with the maturity level to sustain a consistent evaluation of facts that relate to a vision while taking all personal and organizational cultural sensitivity issues into consideration will lead for a long time in this globally based game.

Interview Analysis

The interview process generated the largest data pool to map onto the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) competency framework. The following seven attributes were evaluated in this section using interview scenarios: “Emotional Attachment,” “Disposition for Action,” “Approach to Role Plurality,” “Education and Support,” “Adaptive Intent,” “Attitude to Scope,” and “Attitude to Time.”

Relationship between self and work – Emotional Attachment

As addressed in Table 25, the attribute “Emotional Attachment” starts with a maturity level for a leader who is detached and focused. The second maturity level requires the person to be associated with the successful delivery of organizational benefits. The third maturity level for the “Emotional Attachment” attribute pushes for someone who is passionately committed to the achievement of the program results. A person with the highest maturity level can deliver these results and disconnect from the program if necessary. For example, upon recognizing that a

program is failing, a program manager with the fourth maturity level can deliver available results and explain to governance that the program will not succeed in the long run.

Table 25. Emotional Attachment

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Detached, focused	Need to be associated with successful delivery of organizational benefits	Passionately committed to achievement of programme outcomes	Committed to delivery of external outcomes; Able to disconnect
WoW examples	Guild leaders were detached and focused when dealing with the raid program	Held meetings that showed the level of importance small details had in the successful delivery of benefits	Provided a direct line of communication to show the dedication to the program and its outcomes	Needed to quit guild for personal reasons; recruited real life friend to keep the vision and goals intact

Considering the *WoW* raiding program, a guild can progress with a guild leader who exhibits any of the maturity levels listed below. However, leaders who exhibit the higher maturity levels are more likely to gain support of their teammates and progress the guild more quickly toward the goals and vision of the program. External outcomes is listed as a part of the highest maturity level and relates to details that can be shared with people outside of the guild. For example, progressing in the most difficult raids available provides loot and reputation outcomes that can be verbally or visibly shared with the *WoW* community. All the interviewees had guild leaders who were dedicated to this part of the maturity level. However, the ability to disconnect was not always apparent.

The “Emotional Attachment” attribute is the detached and focused guild leader with the first maturity level. Both Dizkord and Arkonis (See Appendix C) provided examples from their personal experiences. Arkonis said: “He (guild leader) was detached from the guild and never provided me with a sense that I was cared for as an individual” (Arkonis, personal communication, July 2, 2012). Dizkord echoed Arkonis’s comment with a similar statement”

“He (guild leader) was completely detached from the team” (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012). Despite being detached from their guilds, these leaders still had the focus to maintain raiding programs that were progressing.

For the second level, Arkonis provided a basic rundown of what was important to him when he personally fulfilled the role of guild leader for seven months:

I had organization which allowed the raid leader and members to understand that I had everything situated and under control. I made sure everyone knew the rules and that noone was left out of the raid or felt left out of the guild- so everyone wanted to raid. I provided civil discussions because I was able to put myself in the raid leader’s shoes. It gave me the ability to handle conflict fairly. I also had officers who could lead in my absence. I took the time to train them in what values I wanted for the guild before I promoted them to positions of leadership (Arkonis, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

As a raiding guild, organizational benefits centralize on motivating players to raid and progress with the guild. Here Arkonis promoted a focus on unity as a strategy to defeat conflicts and roster inactivity. Sharing and coordinating the vision of the program with the raid leader and officers were examples of how Arkonis associated himself with the successful delivery of organizational benefits.

Podis (See Appendix C), a raid leader, provided an example of the passionate commitment a guild leader can have toward the achievement of the program: “She (guild leader) provided me with direct communication, even offering me her home phone number so I could reach her for questions when she was offline” (Podis, personal communication, June 23, 2012). As a result of her passionate commitment to the third maturity level for “Emotional Attachment,” Podis’s guild was the second furthest progressed in raiding achievements out of approximately 25 raiding guilds on the server at the time (Podis, personal communication, June 23, 2012).

For the final maturity level of “Emotional Attachment,” Dizkord summed up the ability to disconnect for the good of the guild in a few short sentences: “I had my own guild and was

building it up. I ended up quitting for personal reasons and gave this girl my guild. I knew her in real life” (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012). While Dizkord was a dedicated leader, he explained that he would provide nothing more than the first maturity level for this “Emotional Attachment” attribute if he remained guild leader while dealing with his personal issues. The better option for the successful delivery of external outcomes was to disconnect, in this case literally, and transfer the ownership and leadership of the guild to a trusted friend, perceived as a temporarily better leadership fit. The strength, mutual respect, and understanding that Dizkord nurtured in the relationship between himself and his real life friend gave him the confidence to disconnect. He left knowing that his guild had a solid gameplan and leader for reaching those planned outcomes effectively.

Relationship between self and work – Disposition for Action

The term troubleshooter, part of the first maturity level of Table 26, means a leader with a reactive response. Procedural here mean someone who follows the by-the-book directions. The second maturity level builds on this to include a procedural approach, but includes proactive and analytical reasoning. The third maturity level for the “Disposition for Action” attribute includes flexible, reflective, experimental leaders who can adjust the program rules and procedures to be effective. The highest maturity level looks to intuitively reconfigure and realign the organization through the introduction of new program rules when necessary.

Table 26. Disposition for Action

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Trouble-shooter; Procedural	Proactive, analytical; Procedural	Experimental, reflective; Flexible approach to programme rules and procedures	Intuitively reconfigures and realigns the organization; Makes the programme rules
WoW examples	Used YouTube videos to apply raid strategies	Used YouTube videos to look for ideas for raid strategies	Good guild leaders need to be adaptive and have malleability when dealing with a raid program	Joined together raid leader and guild leader role to create a new management structure for leadership

Action always happens in *WoW* when the raiding program is active. One of the largest exhibits for the “Disposition for Action” attribute occurs when a new expansion is released. Guilds must troubleshoot and experiment with their processes continually to meet surprises and expectations set by Blizzard until guild leaders can analytically regulate every nuance of the raiding program that changed as a result of the new game content. Examples include adjusting the raid schedule for key players with the skills and determination to progress in new raids or adjusting the loot distribution because of a change Blizzard made to a raid. The guild leaders with the highest maturity level for “Disposition for Action” will adjust the quickest and become the flagship guilds for the next expansion.

Skooney provided a common example of the typical troubleshooter guild leader when it relates to a raid program attempting new content:

When going against the computer, there is a scripted encounter, so what works for one situation and one guild, their strategy, he would automatically think that strategy would work for his guild even though it would never work exactly like that with his particular group of players because he had different resources available (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

Fortunately, many guild leaders and raid leaders exhibit the second maturity level for the attribute “Disposition for Action” and take this insider information into account when planning

their own strategies, but adapt it based on their own vision, goals, players, and other factors - the proactive, analytical approach (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

Later in the interview, Skooney shared an illustration of the third maturity level for the “Disposition for Action” attribute when he said...

A good guild leader needs to be adaptive and have malleability. When you see a problem, you can't look at it with a singular mindset. You have to consider that there may be multiple solutions to the same problem and apply different strategies to see what works best (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

This example showed flexibility and the willingness to be experimental and reflective when making decisions.

The highest maturity level for the “Disposition for Action” attribute showcases a leader who can intuitively realign and reconfigure the organization as well as make the program rules. Campa, a guild leader who ran the best guild on his server for a year during *Vanilla WoW*, did just this by unconventionally “join[ing] the roles of raid leader and guild leader to avoid rifts and streamline the feedback process” (Campa, personal communication, July 4, 2012). By separating these roles, a guild leader can focus more effort to the many other skills displayed throughout this chapter, but Campa believed that this intuitive reconfiguration of socially-accepted raiding program management was the key to providing his stakeholders with the best program results possible.

Relationship between self and work – Approach to Role Plurality

The “Approach to Role Plurality” attribute, as seen in Table 27, focuses on the ability for a leader to adopt several roles to help the program be more effective. The first maturity level for the “Approach to Role Plurality” attribute is the basic, single, focused role. The second maturity level blossoms into a person who is capable of fulfilling multiple roles but is uneasy with role conflict. The third maturity level, has a leader who can adopt clear positions when any of the

roles conflict. The highest maturity level can confidently take on multiple roles to provide the most effective results by integrating divergent interests.

Table 27. Approach to Role Plurality

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Adopts a focused, single role	Fulfills multiple roles, but is uncomfortable with role conflict	Copes by adopting a clear position when roles potentially conflict	Takes on multiple roles to integrate divergent interests
WoW examples	No approval for raid leader for fear of stepping on toes	Guild leader ran a raid in place of a raid leader but was happier in guild leader role	Took on the roles that noone else wanted to do	Fill out all the gaps to ensure raid program success

Most guild leaders can multitask as a raider, recruiter, negotiator, discipliner, and loot councilor at minimum. There are a handful of leaders who have difficulties with speaking on behalf of others despite their abilities to facilitate interactions – these are the guild leaders with a focused, single role, who exhibit the first maturity level for “Approach to Role Plurality.” Distinguishing characteristics between each of these maturity levels relates to how effectively leaders can handle their primary role, speak for those in other roles, and do the work in additional roles. The highest maturity level for the attribute “Approach to Role Plurality” can navigate all roles effectively to integrate divergent interests within the raid program regardless of the situation.

Arkonis equated the first maturity level for the attribute “Approach to Role Plurality” to a bad moment in his experience under the leadership of a power hungry guild leader. “He (guild leader) made it so I was unable to do my job as raid leader because he would refuse to give me the approval to run certain events for fear of stepping on toes” (Arkonis, personal communication, July 2, 2012). This guild leader did not have the confidence to extend

permissions beyond those involved in the guild leader's personal responsibilities. Clearly, the guild leader adopted a focused, single role as his leadership style.

For the second maturity level, Dizkord provided an example of role conflict: "I remember a few times when the raid leader couldn't be there and the guild leader stepped it up to make sure everything didn't fall apart and everyone was able to raid" (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012). Dizkord expressed that his guild leader had the maturity level to be successful at this role, but that she was more comfortable when the raid leader was back to manage this part of the program (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

Justinaino (See Appendix C), a guild leader, provided an illustration for the third maturity level of "Approach to Role Plurality" through a personal anecdote from when his own guild had a fledgling raiding program:

A good guild leader takes on the role that no one else wants to do. So in the beginning, until I found a good raid leader, I was the raid leader. Once I found a raid leader who wanted that role, I moved on to just being a guild leader and handling the loot council role with the raid leader (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

While Justinaino showed a markedly improved focus and role plurality maturity over his former leader, in this example he showed a distinct judgment of what proverbial hat he wore at what time.

The highest maturity level combines multiple roles to provide the organization with a method for integrating divergent interests. As Justinaino's guild grew, so did Justinaino's maturity level. Upon building his guild into a large raiding program, Justinaino had this to say about his maturity in role plurality:

You can't just be one thing. You have to fill all the gaps. Of course this isn't saying that you won't be able to do one thing better than another, but if you have to be able to get past a point where if there was a gap missing and you can't fill that out, then the guild doesn't raid (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

At this highest maturity level for “Approach to Role Plurality,” Justinaino explained his ability to take on multiple roles to integrate divergent interests for the raiding program to continually raid.

Relationship between self and others – Education and Support

As shown in Table 28, the attribute “Education and Support” begins with this first maturity level explanation: help others solve their problems. The second maturity level shows a leader who is capable of directing others where to look to solve problems. The third maturity level coaches others in how to influence while the fourth maturity level for “Education and Support” extends this to coaching others in context to enable influence.

Table 28. Education and Support

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Helps others solve their problems	Directs others where to look to solve their problems	Coaches in how to influence	Coaches in context to enable influence
WoW examples	Masked the problem to help the situation	Directed the guild leader to go to the WoW forums	Had meetings to explain how to influence others	Talked to players in the guild to enable compromise and create comfortable environments for sharing and learning

“Education and Support” is a fundamental attribute of *WoW*. There are myriad websites, self-help guides, videos, and advice forums to provide knowledge to the *WoW* community. However, a guild leader who has the confidence to provide education and support on the spot is an effective leader. Better yet, a guild leader who can coach in context to enable influence can create a devoted team of raiders who can then influence others in the raid program.

In Justinaino’s interview, he discussed a guild leader who had a real life friend in the guild who was a poor raider: “I was in one guild where the guild leader was friends with a kid who was doing really bad and when I pointed that out to the guild leader, his response was like

‘yeah, don’t worry about it’” (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012). This guild leader helped solve the issue by “masking the problem” (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012) instead of educating and supporting the “bad player” by developing his or her skills. This guild leader put problem resolution ahead of individual growth.

When Podis was asked about his least favorite guild leader, he shared an example that matched the second maturity level shown in Table 28. When asking for help with planning raid tactics, “My old guild leader simply directed me to the forums and ‘Elitist Jerk’ (a *WoW* knowledge data base) to find strategies” (Podis, personal communication, June 23, 2012). In this example Podis explained that his “old guild leader” directed Podis to external locations to resolve the issues.

Skooney provided an illustration about how his guild leader, Somali, was able to mentor his officers in how to influence the guild:

He didn’t micromanage his officers. He knew how to delegate and had a knack for choosing the right person for the job. He gave all of his officers the freedom to make choices on his behalf because he shared with us what his thoughts were for the vision of the guild. Under his leadership, the relationships grew (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

Skooney expressed that through quality communication and an application of trust, his guild leader provided the officers of the guild with the ability to influence others. Mentoring came in the form of explaining why Somali was choosing a particular person for a job and sharing the vision of the guild on a regular basis as reinforcement of the preferred influenced behavior (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012). Justinaino, provided a more pointed example of how to influence through his experience as a guild leader: “I was willing to go out of my way to say this is what we need to do and here is how you do it” (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

Skooney further suggested that a guild leader with the highest maturity in the Education and Support attribute could “talk to somebody to enable influence and compromise” (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012). Dizkord built on this concept a little further. When I asked Dizkord what specific skills his favorite guild leader provided to the guild, his immediate response was: “She (guild leader) worked with players and encouraged them to be a better player not just for the team but for the guild – pay good deeds forward....The guild leader created an atmosphere where people wanted to help” (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012). Dizkord explained that this contextual influence created a positive environment that made Dizkord and others comfortable with proactively supplying aid toward the betterment of the raiding program.

Relationship between self and programme environment – Adaptive Intent

Table 29 below describes the leader who has an adaptive intent when involved with the program. The first maturity level shows a person who simply does what has worked in the past. The next maturity level for the “Adaptive Intent” attribute looks to adapt oneself for the betterment of the environment. The third maturity level is based on the leader who adapts the environment to suit the individual. The highest maturity level is the person who can adapt the environment to suit the purpose of the program.

Table 29. Adaptive Intent

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Do what has worked in the past	Adapts self to suit environment	Adapts environment to suit self	Adapts environment to suit purpose
WoW examples	Raids with the same players	Role plurality to meet the needs of the raid environment	Created a class leader role	Apply different strategies to see what works best for the program

According to the interviews this was one of the most valuable attributes for guild leaders to have. Many good raiding programs benefit from the repetition exemplified in the first level of maturity of Table 29. However, to make raid program progress, guild leaders need to make adaptations to fill the gaps preventing the raiding program from reaching the next plateau. The guild leader who has the highest maturity level for “Adaptive Intent” can adapt the environment to suit whatever needs the raid program requires for success, including but not limited to finding new players or trying out unique strategies. To complete that environmental shift, many attributes may be required – but it takes a leader with an adaptive intent to recognize that need in the first place. The overall value is a more effective raiding guild that meets the goals of the raid program.

Many interviews had examples of guild leaders who followed the first maturity level and simply did what worked in the past – Dizkord mentioned that his guild “was a 10-man raid guild that always used the same people for the raids” (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012). He explained that when particular raid group were successful in the past, the guild leader did not see a need to change it. Skooney provided another example: “He (guild leader) was not open to new things, and well, eventually... you can’t put a square peg into a circle. He lacked the adaptivity (sic). He lacked the ability to adapt quickly and efficiently in a PvE environment” (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012). Justinaino’s explanation for how to be effective with the “Approach to Role Plurality” attribute also was an example of how to meet the second maturity level to adapt oneself to suit the environment: “You can’t just be one thing. You have to fill all the gaps” (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

For the third maturity level, Campa provided an example for how he adapted the environment to suit his needs by implementing a class leader position to the officer ranks. A

class leader is a person who can act as an internal SME for one of the 10 specific play styles in the game. Campa created 10 openings for this guild necessity instead of adapting himself for the commitment: “I don’t give specific tips though – that’s the job of the class leader. They give tips. Set up a structure so they smartest person for the job will do that function for you and your guild” (Campa, personal communication, July 4, 2012). Campa clarified his opinion in the interview by mentioning that he was not interested in learning all the different play styles and abilities of the classes to micromanage his players.

Skooney expressed the highest maturity level for “Adaptive Intent” when he responded to a question about what specific necessary attributes are for an effective guild leader. He said:

A good guild leader needs to be adaptive and have malleability. When you see a problem, you can’t look at it with a singular mindset. You have to consider that there may be multiple solutions to the same problem and apply different strategies to see what works best And no matter what, you have to have the ability to shift your environment to suit the needs of your vision (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

Relationship between self and programme environment – Attitude to Scope

As seen in Table 30, the first maturity level for “Attitude to Scope” is that the scope is defined until changes are authorized. The second maturity level takes cost benefit analyses into account when making decisions related to scope. The third maturity level seeks trialed alternatives when making these decisions. The highest maturity level for the “Attitude to Scope” attribute reflects on scope as an ever-changing process that will be shaped to meet the emerging needs of the program environment.

Table 30. Attitude to Scope

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Defined until changes authorized	Influences scope through cost benefit analysis	Chooses among trialed alternatives	Shaped to meet emerging and changing needs
WoW examples	Raid attendee list stayed the same unless authorized by guild leader	Guild leader used cost benefit analysis to determine if guild should retain current organizational culture	Chose between raid project options	Meeting with guild to decide what to do about changing organizational scope

The primary focus on scope for the average raiding guild is the raiding content. Scope creep emerges when a guild collectively enters into a raiding environment that the guild is not fully prepared for. Most preparation comes from earning enough loot and experience in easier raids to make the players powerful enough and capable enough to complete the harder raids. The more preparation a guild has, the less frustration and raid wipes there will be in the attempts for progression. Cost/benefit analyses occur when a guild is ready to make that decision about whether or not the player base is prepared to transition to harder content. Decisions involve considerations for time investment, player preference, and the perceived levels of skill, power, and determination that the raid group can generate. Trialed alternatives are usually considered when one of these considerations falters, causing uncertainty. Overall the decisions are shaped to meet the collective emerging needs of the raid group.

In the first maturity level for “Attitude to Scope,” Dizkord talked about how one guild leader maintained a non-flexible raiding roster for progression that was defined until changes were authorized. Dizkord said:

The only time they (guild leader and raid leader) cycled out people was when someone couldn't make it - so that left members feeling ostracized and not useful. If the guild leader authorized the raid leader to bring in someone new, the newbie didn't know the fights or [our] strategy for the fights and as a guild member, you know you're only being asked because someone can't make it – it alienates members. Then when inexperienced people mess up on a raid, he would [complain] about that person because the raid failed.

Nothing was ever his fault and that's a poor trait for a guild leader (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

When Justinaino explained how he made decisions from a guild leader perspective about the scope of raid content and progress, his response catered to the second, third and fourth maturity levels for the "Attitude to Scope" attribute:

I – I – tried several different approaches. From BC to Wrath (WotLK), we tried to figure out who was the highest on the server and how do we match that. Once *WoW* started feeling like a job and wasn't fun anymore, when Wrath came along, we basically based it on what strategies came out and what was said of the strategies, we would determine... if we could progress based on the resources we had (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

Justinaino explained that he used a cost/benefit analysis to determine what was best for his guild and discussed his trialed alternatives: compete against the best or compete casually. He also communicated in his interview the need to alter the scope of the progression for the guild based on the changing needs of the raiding roster.

Relationship between self and programme environment – Attitude to Time

Table 31 evaluates the different maturity levels for the attribute "Attitude to Time." The maturity levels begin with a schedule driven approach that only reschedules when necessary. The second maturity builds on this with a consideration that one must plan for work and recognize mobilization time. From there, someone who has the third maturity level will be aware of the rate of change that the environment can handle. The highest maturity level reveals a leader who is conscious of timeliness and maturity issues.

Table 31. Attitude to Time

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Schedule driven; reschedule when necessary	Planning for possible work, recognizing mobilization time	Aware of the rate at which the environment can absorb or accommodate change	Conscious of issues of timeliness and maturity
WoW examples	A guild leader finds any way possible to get that guild up and raiding if everyone shows up	Completed necessary pre-raid work to ensure guild was ready to raid at the scheduled time	Awareness of personal tendencies when making decisions	Awareness of changing organizational culture when updating scope and vision

Time is an important consideration for guild leaders. If the raid program does not progress quickly enough, players will leave the guild for other guilds perceived to have faster progression. The schedule driven guild leader of the first maturity level and the time-focused guild leader of the fourth maturity level are very different in respect to how their raid programs progress.

Justinaino expressed the schedule-driven first maturity level for “Attitude to Time” when he said: “Even you (Casey) as a former guild leader, must agree that if it comes down to the choice of raiding versus not raiding, you find any way possible to get that guild up and raiding if they all show up to raid” (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

For the second maturity level, Podis talked about his favorite guild leader: “It’s amazing that this woman was so driven that she could motivate 40 people to be so serious minded to raid for 4 hours a night with an hour of prep work beforehand” (Podis, personal communication, June 23, 2012). Podis explained that his guild leader would provide Podis with a great foundation to start off every possible raid by always updating the DKP and raid roster ahead of time (Podis, personal communication, June 23, 2012).

Skooney shared insight to the third maturity level for “Attitude to Time” when he said “a good guild leader has to have constitution and conviction when talking to their team and be

aware of time and personal tendencies to be a good leader” (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012). Justinaino built upon this concept in his example from “Attitude for Scope” about the use of a cost benefit ratio to change the raiding program. His illustrations were examples of both the third and fourth maturity levels for “Attitude to Time.” For Justinaino, this awareness to time was pivotal toward determining that it was the appropriate time to alter his guild’s vision from that of a “hardcore” guild to an “in-between” guild. As a result, Justinaino explained that his guild successfully weathered this alteration to the raiding program because Justinaino timed the decision properly based on his knowledge about his guild and the maturity of the raid program.

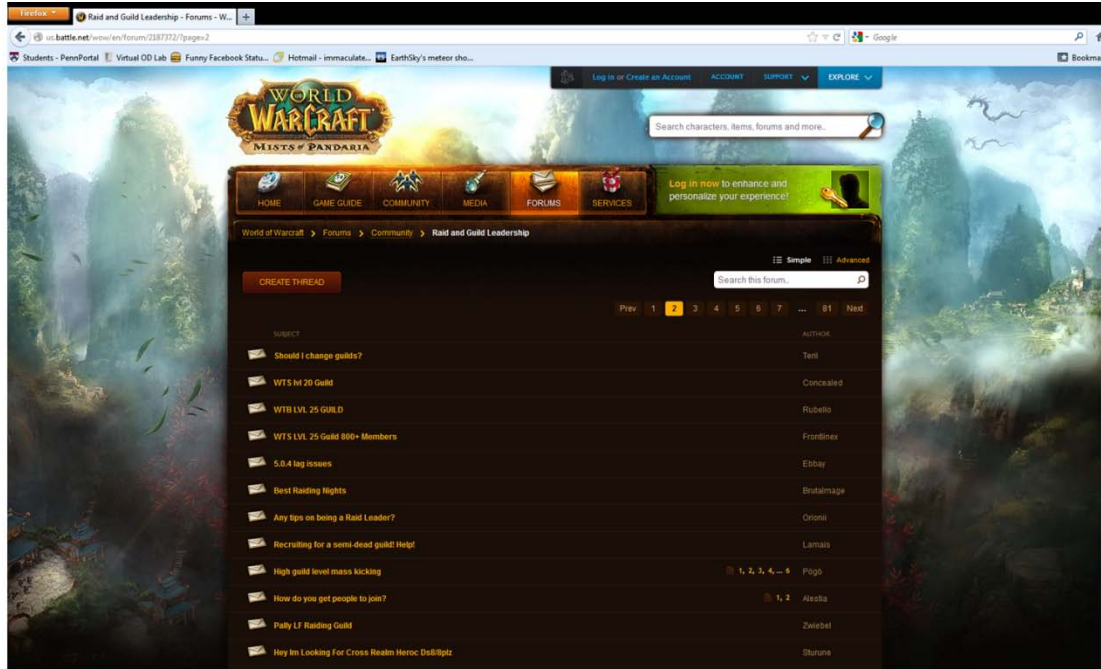
Artifact Analysis

For the forum review, the data were mapped to the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) competency model to find the most relevant attribute examples from this methodology. As a side note, the use of male or female pronouns for the guild leaders discussed throughout this section is a result of the gender the player chose for their character in the game. Table 32 provides the reader with a list of the guild leaders discussed in this section, the date that the forum message was obtained, and the name of the player’s guild.

Table 32. List of Guild Leaders

Guild Leader	Date	Guild
Pessimist	July 27, 2012	Executive Decision
Solaeris	July 28, 2012	Exiles
Koica	July 28, 2012	Astral
Virtutis	August 26, 2012	Enigma
Galifianakis	May 28, 2012	Odd Future
Tyrnyx	May 28, 2012	Gag Reflex
Hudiddytoo	May 28, 2012	The Ministry
Nandianya	May 29, 2012	The Riddle of Steel
Partyongarth	June 19, 2012	Flawed by Design
Jakethetank	June 19, 2012	Serious
Hespler	June 19, 2012	We Punt Gnomes
Nebliina	June 19, 2012	Phoenix Fusion

The last four attributes to be evaluated are: “Use of Questions,” “Awareness of Organizational Capabilities,” “Approach to Governance,” and “Attitude to Funding.” The titles of the topics with the highest scoring examples, as reviewed in Chapter 3, of these attributes were: “Ineffective passing of guild leadership,” “Dealing with the deaf,” “DS mount dropped, curious about opinions,” “Extra Mists info,” “My entire guild was ruined in 6 hours,” and “Guild repairs...” At a high level in respective order these topics cover: dealing with governance, team dynamics, reward distribution, the new raiding program, risk prevention, and budgets. Figure 15 provides a visual depiction of what the *WoW* forums look like.

Figure 15. *WoW Leadership Forums*

Relationship between self and others – Use of Questions

In Table 33, the use of questions for one’s own clarification is the description for the first maturity level of the “Use of Questions” attribute. From there, the second maturity level expresses the use of questions to challenge others. The third maturity level builds on this by encouraging creative thinking while challenging others. The highest maturity level for the attribute “Use of Questions” redefines the problem and reframes the purpose after using creative thinking to challenge others through the use of questions.

Table 33. Use of Questions

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Own clarification	1+ challenges others	2+ encourages creative thinking	3+ redefine problem; reframe purpose
WoW examples	Guild fell apart. Only asked questions to clarify	Used questions to challenge others about why a deaf player can't raid	Used questions to encourage others to consider alternate solutions to help the deaf player	Used questions to express his belief that the deaf player may just be the best player in the raid if the guild just gave him a chance

A successful raiding program takes multiple perspectives into account throughout the process of attempting strategies. For example, if a raid fails, the guild leader will typically follow a process that takes the first three maturity levels into account: First, the guild leader will ask “What happened?” to clarify the problem. Challenging others then occurs – “Why did you have your character standing there?” The next step is creative thinking – “Well, where do you think your character can stand next time to avoid the issue from happening again?” The highest maturity level might reveal itself if a guild leader can then take the information gained from that conversation and create a new plan for the raid program that effectively prevents that particular problem from happening again.

The former guild leader, Galifianakis, provided an example of the first maturity level for the “Use of Questions” attribute when he talked about his guild problems. He wrote: “I asked one of my remaining members what happened,” (Galifianakis, 2012, My Entire Guild) upon entering the game and seeing that his guild was falling apart.

Guild leader Pessimist provided advice and reassurance to Jeapers, a player with concerns for how to provide assistance to a deaf raider through illustrations of the second, third and fourth maturity levels of the “Use of Questions” attribute. Pessimist said: “I think you're asking the right questions” (Pessimist, 2012, Dealing with the Deaf) in regard to Jeapers thoughts

on challenging the guild leader to think differently. Pessimist then provided examples about his ability to use questions to challenge and apply tactics for a deaf member for his own raiding program in the past. Pessimist explained that asking the right questions helped him figure out how to work around the issue and provide awareness to the group – reframing the purpose of the problem to consider that this deaf member “may wind up being the most dedicated, outgoing and well-performing member on [the] team” (Pessimist, 2012, Dealing with the Deaf).

Relationship between self and program environment – Organizational Capabilities

In Table 34, the attribute “Awareness of Organizational Capabilities” begins with the assumption that departments can deliver. The second maturity level pushes for results despite the awareness of shortcomings. The third maturity level also considers shortcomings but considers that the person may go outside of the program for assistance. The highest maturity level includes the previous maturity levels but also includes a reflection upon internal possibilities before going outside the program for aid.

Table 34. Awareness of Organizational Capabilities

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Assumes departments can deliver	Aware of shortcomings. Pushes for delivery	Aware of shortcomings, prepared to go outside without hesitation	Aware and prepared to go outside after exploring internal possibilities
WoW examples	Guild leader assumes raiders can do their jobs	Awareness of deaf player. Provides modifications to strategy and pushes for delivery	Awareness causes guild leader to go outside and look for additions to provide relief	Awareness causes guild leader to consider going outside only if internal options, such as macros, do not work

The “Awareness of Organizational Capabilities” for a raid program focuses solely on what the raid members can deliver. When a guild leader assumes that everyone knows their role, the first maturity level is apparent. The guild leader who can evaluate weaknesses and defend

against them to progress the raid program meets the second maturity level of “Awareness of Organizational Capabilities.” From there, a guild leader who finds outside help from either guild members not on the raids or players outside of the guild meets the third maturity level description. Finally, the guild leader who is aware of the weaknesses and attempts to inspire change before going outside shows the maturity of the highest level for the “Awareness of Organizational Capabilities” attributes.

Going back to the forum topic “Dealing with the deaf,” about how to adapt raiding for a deaf guild member, Koica, a guild leader, provided examples of the first and second maturity levels for the “Awareness of Organizational Capabilities” attribute because she was aware of the shortcomings on the raiding roster and made changes to push for progression. Afterward, she assumed her raiders would deliver:

I raided with someone who was not completely deaf, but still couldn't rely on vent (voice over internet program) because she couldn't always catch what was being said. It wasn't a problem. We always discussed strategies on our web site forums beforehand, and didn't do full boss explanations during raids because people were expected to have read them already (Koica, 2012, Dealing with the Deaf).

Pessimist provided an example of the third maturity level for “Awareness of Organizational Capabilities” when his guild went outside to get assistance for a deaf member. He saw the value of using a modification to the game known as “BigWigs” to provide the deaf player with a better visual warning option: “Getting BigWigs was a huge help as it allows more customization to make warnings bigger/flashier” (Pessimist, 2012, Dealing with the Deaf).

Pessimist’s route is a popular option, but Solaeris exhibits the highest maturity level by introducing macros, an internal scripting tool, to the conversation:

Having the deaf player create macros that indicate what he/she needs and using a raid warning to communicate those needs is also not difficult. Sure, it may take a little extra time before a fight to get those macros set up, but every player, deaf or not, who is an

asset to your raid and guild is worth those extra few minutes (Solaeris, 2012, Dealing with the Deaf).

Relationship between self and program environment – Approach to Governance

Table 35 begins with the use of standardized reporting as the way to approach governance. The second maturity level looks to create a stable support structure that communicates both ways. To exemplify the third maturity level, a person must be able to adapt or create control procedures to specific or dynamic situations that relate to governance. The highest maturity level involves embedding the program in the organizational management structure.

Table 35. Approach to Governance

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Use standardized reporting hierarchy	Create stable support structures both ways	Adapt/create control procedures to specific/dynamic situations	Embedding programme in organizational management structures
WoW examples	Provided detailed report on WoW forums	Submit a ticket to Blizzard for support	Created a guild website for sharing anticipated program changes	Shared the website with other players outside the guild via the WoW forums

There exist only a handful of ways that governance and the player base connect: The forums, private messaging, email, or the telephone. When calling Blizzard Entertainment on the telephone, the company expresses a preference for the forums when a person listens to the automated messaging system. As a result of the limitations, until researching examples to use for this attribute, it was considered improbable for a guild leader to reach the fourth maturity level for the attribute “Approach to Governance.”

Galifianakis had a problem with his guild and hoped that by writing a message on the Blizzard Entertainment forums governance would fix the problem. This is the most basic,

standardized way that a player can report information to Blizzard Entertainment in request for assistance and is an example of the first maturity level: “I have done literally nothing wrong to have this happen. Blizzard, do something about this” (Galifianakis, 2012, My Entire Guild).

One level above that is the support structure put in place by Blizzard Entertainment, known to players as a “ticket” that provides two-way direct communication between the player and governance. The creation of the ticket for problem resolution is an example of the second maturity level toward approaching governance. After reading the request for help by Galifianakis, the following three guild leaders, Tyrnyx, Hudiddytoo, and Nandianya showed that maturity level when they suggested that he put in a “ticket” for help (2012, My Entire Guild).

Guild leader Virtutis created a webpage to gather all the Mists of Pandaria information released by Blizzard Entertainment and other sources. His approach to governance is an example of both the third and fourth maturity levels for the “Approach to Governance” attribute. Virtutis explained that he invented a control procedure (website) for the organization of information (forums) for a dynamic situation occurring in the near future (Mists of Pandaria expansion) that will be affected by governance alterations (his raid program). He then embedded this information on the *WoW* forums, a governance-regulated organizational management structure, in hopes that other guild leaders and players would make use of the organized information for their raid programs – “I thought I would at least make the link public here as well, for anyone wanting some more Mists Information” (Virtutis, 2012, Extra Mists Info). Below is a visual of Virtutis’ webpage in Figure 16.

Figure 16. Virtutis' *Mists of Pandaria* Website

Relationship between self and program environment – Attitude to Funding

This attribute begins with budget driven funding as the first maturity level. The second maturity level for “Attitude to Funding” points out the consequences of underfunding. From there, the third maturity level looks to include the consideration of budget ambiguities and financial uncertainty. The fourth maturity level describes the leader who can create a budget from achievement as seen in Table 36.

Table 36. Attitude to Funding

	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young	Budget driven	Points out consequences of underfunding	Aware of budget ambiguities and financial uncertainty	Creates budget from achievement
WoW examples	Virtual money used was based on what was available in the guild bank	Guild leader shared the consequences of an underfunded guild bank with members	Guild leader expressed an interest in sharing information about the budget with guild members to prevent conflict	Budget for guild repairs was created through a ranking process of achievements in raid program

Funding in *WoW* relates to two game mechanics: the DKP process and the virtual money. DKP and virtual money that are owned by the guild are both typically managed by the guild leader. The maturity level of this individual can impact the value of these two mechanics significantly.

After reading about how guild leader Partyongarth wanted to know how other guild leaders handled the distribution of virtual money for raid repairs guild leader Hespler said that his decision was “all dependent on how much money is in the GB (guild bank)” (Hespler, 2012, Guild Repairs) which is a first maturity budget driven approach to the issue. Guild leader Nebliina showed the second maturity level by stating her concerns with an underfunded guild bank – “the funds started shrinking” so she sent out a warning message to her guild about the issue and “shortly thereafter, funds starting rising again” (Nebliina, 2012, Guild Repairs).

Guild leader Jakethetank applied the third level of maturity to the attribute “Attitude to Funding” when he mentioned financial uncertainties and ambiguities that can happen in regard to guild bank coffers:

Most guilds are not spending their gold (virtual money) on their guildies, or events, or whatever. This i (sic) know is a general statement and not allways (sic) true. But in other words, the income is higher then (sic) the spending for most guilds. So gold in guild bank just gets (sic) larger and larger. A way to fix this, gripes in gchat (guild chat) about gold spending, guild loans, what we should be buying and so on, is to equal incoming and outgoing gold...to some extent (Jakethetank, 2012, Guild Repairs).

He explained that if a guild leader shared the virtual money from the guild bank with the players, there would be fewer disgruntled players who would question financial choices – this decision model is “good for morale, and keeps the financial gold disputes to a minimum” according to Jakethetank (2012, Guild Repairs).

Finally, a guild leader with the fourth maturity level for the attribute “Attitude to Funding” creates the budget from achievement. In his illustration, the original poster,

Partyongarth, used achievements as a way to break down how much virtual money he budgeted to his guild members. He exhibited this maturity when he said:

In my guild, I allow raiders a pretty hefty amount of g-repairs (guild repairs), somewhere in the 250-300g (virtual money) region to take care of our progression wipes. I give vets and their alts about 100g a day. Pure casuals get 50g a day for their dungeon runs and new members get nothing until they put in a bit of time (Partyongarth, 2012, Guild Repairs).

In his illustration, Partyongarth used achievements as the foundation for breaking down how much virtual money he gave to his guild members. His “raiders” received the most because they were providing the greatest assistance to the raiding program. Meanwhile, his “vets” and “alts,” apparently were roles in the guild that were not regular raiders but were appreciated for what they did provide; thus they earn less than the raider role but more than the “pure casual” role. The pure casual role and the “new members” were placed on the lowest ranking for assisting with achievements for the program and thus received the smallest amount from the budget.

Guild Leader Advice Evaluation

These guild leader evaluations were only for guild leaders from the *WoW* forums discussed in the context of this paper. After assessing the information for research value, the consideration was made as to whether or not the information had the same value in the video game. Do guild leaders who provided advice with higher maturity levels apply these higher maturity levels into their leadership style to produce better raid program results than guild leaders with lower maturity level averages? Below, Table 37 is a chart of preliminary findings based on the 0-5 ranking system introduced in Chapter 3.

Table 37. Guild Leader Maturity Level and Guild Progression Evaluation

OP	Replier	Avg of Levels	Guild	All Raids	Cata Dungeon	Cata Raid	Avg Raid
	Pessimist	3.8	Executive Decision	79%	100%	66%	81.6%
	Solaeris	3.7	Exiles	74%	100%	83%	85.6%
	Koica	3.8	Astral	39%	85%	41%	55.0%
Virtutis		4.0	Enigma	81%	100%	100%	93.6%
Galifianakis		1.0	Odd Future	0	0	0	0.0%
	Tyrnyx	1.0	Gag Reflex	59%	100%	100%	86.3%
	Hudiddytoo	3.1	The Ministry	77%	100%	83%	86.6%
	Nandianya	2.0	The Riddle of Steel	31%	100%	66%	65.6%
Partyongarth		2.4	Flawed by Design	58%	100%	41%	66.3%
	Jakethetank	2.6	Serious	66%	100%	50%	72.0%
	Hespler	1.3	We Punt Gnomes	34%	100%	8%	47.3%
	Nebliina	2.4	Phoenix Fusion	75%	100%	58%	77.7%

The first and second columns are the names of the guild leaders. The third column is the average maturity level for the player. The fourth column is the name of the raiding guild he or she led. The fifth, sixth, and seventh columns are the percentages of raids that the guilds completed. The eighth column provides the average of the raid content completed.

The data were entered into Microsoft Excel's statistics tool to see if there was a correlation between the average maturity level of the guild leader and the average raid percentage that the guild completed highlighted Table 37. The correlation was: $r = 0.552$. With such a small sample and a possible personal bias in the interpretation of one of the variables, these results have obvious limitations. It might be feasible to examine the correlations in more detail, with more rigorous, formal methods that consider competency modeling techniques. This is worthy of further study that is beyond the scope or intent of this Capstone.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Imagine yourself the hiring manager for a program management position reviewing an applicant with the following on a resume:

- *World of Warcraft* guild leader for a top performing guild on the Kalecgos server for 2 years

In the past, such experiences would likely have been considered irrelevant as a qualification for a “real” program management job. However, the major findings of this research support the conclusion that perhaps this qualification is not so far-fetched.

By examining data from literature reviews, forum reviews, and personal interviews, many examples of leadership-related information was available for analysis. The examination of the data provided *WoW* leadership examples for all 68 Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) maturity levels across 17 program competency attributes, the ability to create a preliminary analysis of guild leader forum advice was also an option open to evaluation.

The preliminary findings argued that the *WoW* guild leaders exhibited similar leadership qualities to the program managers evaluated by Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005). The practical implications of this study are important for an upcoming generation of program managers who grew up in a gaming era (Kron, Gjerde, Sen & Fetters, 2010). For example, a Program Manager position from *Monster.com* shown in Table 38 could potentially be fulfilled by an effective *WoW* guild leader with the proper on-boarding.

Table 38. Recent Job Posting for Program Manager from *Monster.com*

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
1. Develop and execute goals and strategic direction of assigned program	← Creating a guild; Managing a raid program
2. Pursue, capture and manage program through entire lifecycle	← Handling expansion changes
3. Interact and coordinate with Contracts Administration on issues pertaining to requirements, changes, interpretations, and financial conditions of the contract	←
4. Responsible for program growth by developing and marketing new technology or product(s) to existing or new customers	← Raid program support
5. Accountable for all schedules, quality, profit & loss and customer satisfaction on program	←
6. Develop and implement corrective action plans when deviations from budgets and/or schedules are evident	← Manage raiders and virtual money for raid program
7. Assign and manage internal, external, multi-divisional, direct and matrixed resources to ensure all objectives and goals are met	←
8. Develop, prepare and present briefings to both executive management and the customer related to the program status, direction, marketing and performance	← Contact Blizzard with problems; Raid meetings with officers/players
9. Formally identify, assess, monitor and mitigate risk throughout program life cycle	←
10. Provide leadership to cross functional team. Assure communication and cooperation among team members and resolve areas of conflict	← Raid program risk management
11. Ability to influence/shape future customer requirements	← Raid specific meetings
12. Develop marketing requirements through a thorough understanding of the product capabilities and the current customer requirements *****	← Onboarding by the organization
13. Other duties as assigned	←

Hiring managers would have to be able to translate the contracts administration, customers, and organizational resources in the job description to Blizzard governance, *WoW* raiding roles, and game resources. Hiring managers would need to understand the value a leader from the video game world could provide to their organization. According to a former IBM manager, IBM has already used this strategy for hiring new employees as a way to stay ahead of the competition (enviableworkplace, 2011).

The research findings are consistent with the assertions of previous researchers of leadership in the video gaming environment. Dannecker, Richter, Lechner, Drebnar, Febisch, and Ilsemann (2008) state: “In the future, young adults will have a considerable amount of experience in Online Gaming and those experiences spill over to professional settings” (p. 1). Reeves, Malone, and O’Driscoll (2008) echo this statement by saying: “leadership in online games offers a sneak preview of tomorrow’s business world” (p. 3). This pilot study expanded

on previous studies by transitioning the topic from the generic applicable leadership role to that of a specific program manager function.

Summary

This pilot study began as a quest for more information when a University of Pennsylvania Organizational Dynamics class sparked an interest in the topic of similarities between *WoW* guild leadership and program management. After completing informal, preliminary investigative inquiries with video game players, starting with Michael Scott, Jr., my husband, and Kurt Richardson, an MBA student at Northeastern University, the decision was made to investigate this concept further. The intention was to evaluate possible similarities through Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) program manager competency model in a pilot study with an overarching goal to consider what implications this research may have for the professional program management and *WoW* communities.

The formal research process began with a review of literature related to *WoW* and other video games. Discussions with gamers and game enthusiasts, including Professor Werbach at the Wharton School, generated more knowledge on the topic of leadership in video games. *WoW* forums, ethnographic participant observations, *YouTube* videos, and chat rooms were among additional areas identified for data gathering. Interviews were held in person, on the phone, and on *Skype* with several people in *WoW* leadership positions as well as with professional program managers. The pilot study covered many areas of gamer influence and netted 363 data "strips" (Agar, 1986) for evaluation.

After assessing the research and mapping the data to Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young's (2005) competency model, the findings seemed to provide a proof of concept for competency similarities between professional program managers and *WoW* guild leaders. Table

39 provides a sample of the detailed attribute examples that the research findings generated in connection to the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model. The data for this specific example were gathered from the *WoW* leadership forums.

Table 39. Attitude to Funding Comparison Overview

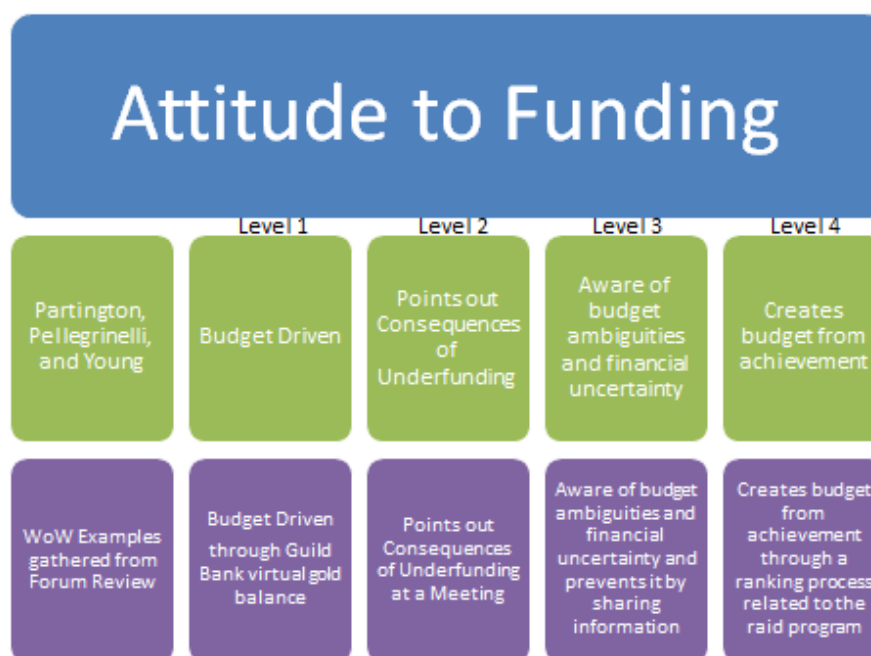


Table 40 provides a sample of the similarities between the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) competency model and the *WoW* research findings.

Table 40. *WoW* Examples Mapped to the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005)

Competency Model

Attribute	Maturity Level	Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young Example	WoW Example	Methodology Used
Relationship with the Team	1	Supportive and responsive to requests for help	Guild leaders set aside predetermined times to meet with guild members about personal or raid issues	WoW Literature Review
Approach to Conflict and Divergence	3	Considered legitimate - seeks negotiated solution	Completed performance reviews and discussed alternative methods for improvement	WoW Literature Review
Expectations of Others	2	Expects special effort when required	Special effort was needed for progression: fire gear for Molten Core raid project	WoW Literature Review
Adaptive Intent	3	Adapts environment to suit self	Created a class leader role	Interviews
Awareness of Organizational Capabilities	3	Aware of shortcomings, prepared to go outside without hesitation	Awareness causes guild leader to go outside and look for add-ons to provide relief	WoW Forum Review
Approach to Risk	4	Be ready for consequences of failure	Provided the right attitude to prepare the group for failure	WoW Literature Review
Approach to Governance	2	Create stable support structures both ways	Submit a ticket to Blizzard for support	WoW Forum Review
Attitude to Time	1	Schedule driven; reschedule when necessary	A guild leader finds any way possible to get that guild up and raiding if everyone shows up	Interviews
Disposition for Action	4	Intuitively reconfigures and realigns the organization; Makes the programme rules	Joined together raid leader and guild leader role to create a new management structure for leadership	Interviews

Similarities were found for all 68 attributes and a proof of concept was established via this pilot study. A larger research study will be necessary to examine the connections that these preliminary results uncovered.

An Additional Research Finding

An additional research finding came in the interview process when it was identified that level one maturity levels could be as powerful as level four maturity levels. In Campa's reflection of successful leadership during the interview process, he shared examples that

encompassed the entire “Granularity of Focus” (refer to Table 19) attribute. However, he explained that his personal attention to detail, a competency most prevalent in the fledgling program manager (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005) was the primary factor for his effectiveness. Agar (2010) noted in his research that surprises, such as what was uncovered in Campa’s interview, should be taken seriously. Instead of placing surprising findings into an “error variance” category, one should “creat[e] new concepts to account for them” (Agar, 2010, p. 289).

So with Agar’s perspective in mind, what does this finding mean? It means that each guild has a particular or unique set of attributes and maturity levels that play to the strengths of that guild’s raid program objectives, stakeholders, and vision. These results support Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young’s (2005) findings that: “there were times when behaviour relating to a lower level conception was more appropriate to the situation” (p. 92). This critical thinking provides insight into the individual merits of each of the 68 maturity levels of the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model. In Campa’s guild leadership experience, being effective in a specific maturity level within a specific attribute was perceived by him as the most valuable component for his success. This ability to focus on specific maturity levels can be an invaluable tool for guild leaders to use when transitioning into the professional program management environment.

Limitations

The usable data derived from the data gathering methods for this pilot study was uneven. As can be seen in Table 41, some attributes ended up with only a fraction of the examples available for some other attributes.

Table 41. *WoW* Interview Results Mapped to
Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) Model

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	TOTAL
S1. Granularity of Focus	1	2	6	4	13
S2. Emotional Attachment	5	2	4	2	13
S3. Disposition for Action	5	2	5	4	16
S4. Approach to Role Plurality	0	1	1	5	7

The questions asked in the interview process may not have elicited a full spectrum of responses or the range of data may have been restricted due to the exclusion of participant observation data. Because Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) did not provide examples of the data that they used to create their model in detail, there is no assurance as to whether these preliminary research findings are typical. This question is worthy of future study.

Future Research

Because the preliminary research only focused on only one program management competency model (Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young, 2005), the same approach can be used with other program management models to see if the similarities persist when alternative program management competencies are introduced. Future research studies of larger gamer populations can also expand the research into other MMOs and video game leadership roles.

Other job roles can also receive consideration for comparison. Perhaps guild leaders display business analyst or consultant competencies, as well. Guild leaders already involved in program management may be the best qualified people to place in the positions of recruitment and hiring of gamers for organizations. Considerations should also be made to investigate this

proof of concept among hybrid program managers who use virtual settings on a regular basis for remote collaboration.

Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) had a purpose for designing a way to look at the necessary attributes and maturity levels for effective program management: “Corporate leaders know that promoting proven project managers into a programme manager role is unreliable, yet little rigorous research has been done into the distinctiveness of programme management competence” (p. 1). No research had previously been done to determine explicitly if effective guild leaders could become effective program managers through the transfer video gaming leadership competencies to the professional world.

The purpose of this pilot research study was to evaluate the first part of this consideration – do guild leaders show the same leadership competencies as program managers? The findings seem to show that competency similarities exist. After completing a more rigorous research study in the future, the next step should be an investigation into whether a direct transfer of leadership skills from virtual games to the corporate world is possible. For leadership development purposes, it would also be important to explore if program managers can transfer their effectiveness into *WoW* guild leadership roles or make use of previous *WoW* guild leadership experiences in their current job roles. Beyond that, this process of hiring *WoW* guild leaders based on matched program management competencies over time may also lead to the development of sophisticated software selection systems for program managers in the future.

Next steps can also include the application of this pilot study in the professional program management realm. Dickey (2011) discussed findings surrounding the application of *WoW* as a way to engage all students and professionals in leadership development:

It was noted that seven of the male students who were more introverted in class became much more extroverted during gameplay. It was observed that while these male students

were willing to play leadership roles in the game, this did not transfer into other classroom activities. Six of these same students, who played leadership roles in *WoW*, were reluctant to assume leadership roles in the classroom setting (Role-Reversal: observations, para. 1).

Academic settings can evaluate the use of online gaming as a learning laboratory environment for professional program, project, and portfolio managers or students who want to continue the development of their leadership skills. This virtual gaming environment can also be a venue to study and teach the dynamics of leadership and the virtues of system thinking in relation to program management.

Conclusion

This pilot study was completed to determine whether the research question: “Do *WoW* raiding guild leaders and program managers use similar competencies in their job function?” had merit. Using the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model of the breadth of skills that program managers exhibit, the findings suggest that similar attributes were necessary for the effectiveness of raiding guild leaders. The evaluation of *WoW* forum guild leader advice added external reliability to the guild interview research findings and provides confidence that this preliminary research is headed in the right direction.

The overarching value of this research process turned out to be progress towards evolving the understanding of program management skill building. While traditionally, educational value has been gained in classrooms and professional settings, the foundations for a roadmap to success in Program Management can now consider additional outlets for skill building. Video game leadership experiences, such as the *WoW* guild leader position, can be incorporated into leadership development programs or viewed as a method for cultivating the experiential requirements to become an effective program manager. Development programs relating to the

research findings here can focus on bridging the gap between the art (video game leadership) and science (professional P3 work) of management by leveraging the competencies needed by both.

Bridging this gap has the potential to produce outcomes that we cannot imagine in today's business setting. The armed forces, medical professions, and top organizations are already adapting their practices to introduce video game simulations as learning and development tools. For example, the military has an ongoing Advanced Distributed Learning Initiative for providing the highest quality education and training to their stakeholders (Bonk & Dennen, 2005). Virtual games were specifically evaluated for their use with individualized skill-based military training and development:

Massive multiplayer online gaming (MMOG) is one technology that offers unique education, training, and performance support opportunities. While the research on MMOG is scant, there is a need for a review of measurement methodologies related to MMOGs for adult learners. In particular, this document notes trends in the use of games and simulations for education and training purposes, common and preferred communication features, motivational aspects of multiplayer games, and the results of preliminary research in this field. In addition, it outlines completed and ongoing efforts to develop training games in a military context as well as findings related to the transfer of performance in games to performance on occupational tasks. As is evident in this document, there is a pressing need to know how problem solving and decision-making skills are being measured in online gaming environments (Bonk & Dennen, 2005, p. vii).

Similarly, the medical community is making this transition. Kron, Gjerde, Sen, and

Fetters (2010) state that their data...

indicate that medical students, overall, are interested in serious games and MMOs as pedagogical vehicles and specifically as epistemic constructs to help them develop ethical and professional ways of knowing, being, acting and interacting in the medical community. This information is heartening in view of both recent calls for higher quality medical education and the known difficulties that educators face in imparting ethical and professional values to medical students. Blended learning that incorporates new media technologies with traditional approaches can help overcome the limitations of traditional teaching environments and help meet this critical mandate (Medical Education, para. 1).

Other outlets for video game learning include IBM. This organization already uses video games to educate employees about business process management (Kron, et al, 2010; Reeves,

Malone, & O'Driscoll, 2008). Cisco is another organization that leverages this technology for business by practicing networking concepts through serious games (Kron, et al, 2010). Kron et al (2010) also make mention that: Raybourn, a subject matter expert in computer-human simulations uses virtual locations to evaluate and learn from intercultural communication as well as handle conflict resolution. Economist Castronova uses MMOs as both leadership simulators and pristine laboratories for economics-related research (Kron, et al, 2010).

Program and project management communities are in a position to consider the same transition. Leveraging *WoW* leadership roles can be a two-way learning process. The argument was made that leaders in *WoW* should be considered for positions in program management communities to learn and grow under professional guidance. Meanwhile, leaders in program and project management can use *WoW* as a training ground for building the maturity levels in required attributes for a program without risks to the organization. Perhaps in the near future, the personal anecdote from Chapter 1 about the Marine sergeant compliment will be the new norm in the program management community.

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APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Add-ons: It is common for players to upload add-ons to the game that were created by players of that game. The purpose of using add-ons is to make objectives easier to understand and/or complete. Examples include add-ons for map directions, for damage dealing, and for protecting your friends in the game from dying. Everyone who uploads the same add-ons can have access to the same information which makes data sharing easy and reliance on these add-ons commonplace.

Alt: The word alt is short for alternate character. Any player can choose up to nine alts to play on their server aside from their primary character. Many times a player creates an alt to test out different classes (See Class).

Class: *World of Warcraft* provides players with 10 distinct play styles to enjoy. After purchasing the game but before playing for the first time, a player has to choose a class. This class is a constant element of the character and cannot be changed. If a player decides that he or she does not like the play style that is achieved by choosing that particular class, the only option is to start over with a new character from level 1. As of the *Cataclysm* expansion, there are 10 classes available. The 10 unique classes are: mage, druid, warlock, hunter, priest, paladin, shaman, rogue, death knight, and warrior. Choosing a Class defines the scope of the play style and ability for a player. Everyone in *World of Warcraft* must choose one at the beginning of the game.

The different abilities and talents for each class are explained on the *World of Warcraft* site here:

<http://us.battle.net/wow/en/game/class/>

Class Leader: A Class Leader is an optional role for a person in a guild who is an expert with his or her class – if a guild leader so chooses to make use of this role in his or her guild.

Dragon Kill Points (DKP): A preferred method for establishing who has priority access to loot (see Loot) after successful completion of a Player versus Environment (PVE) encounter. DKP is cumulative so those who raid with the guild most often earned the most DKP. This virtual currency is guild-only and is not interchangeable between guilds. Typically, DKP is earned by spending time in raids, completing objectives with the guild, or by participating in other important guild-related activities. Therefore, the more time a player spends with the guild, the more DKP currency is earned and the more loot one has the potential to win. In the bidding process, the more interest a raider has in winning the loot will determine how much DKP he or she is willing to bid on the loot. If another player was willing to bid more DKP, the second player would win the loot. The highest bidder wins the items, therefore the more raids one attends, the more DKP he or she earns, and the better chances that player has of being rewarded in relation to his or her efforts (Reeves, Malone, & O'Driscoll, 2008).

Endgame: The content of the video game that is available only after one reaches the maximum level (see Maximum Level) in the game.

Expansion: An Expansion is the developer's release of new content for a game that dramatically increases the amount of activities available for the average player. *World of Warcraft* saw the release of 4 expansions so far on a roughly 2-year interval between expansions. Expansion basics are available in Chapter 2.

Loot: The rewards one receives for completing PvE content. In the context of this paper, loot refers to rewards from raiding. Loot can come in the form of either virtual money or virtual clothing that can temporarily or permanently improves one's virtual avatar.

Loot Council: A loot council is a created group of officers, raid leaders, and/or the guild leader. This council decides who will receive loot when it drops based on their own criteria for who

deserves the reward – this is typically the option a guild uses if the guild leader does not wish to maintain a DKP tracking and bidding process.

Maximum Level: Maximum level is the point in the game when developers feel a player gained enough experience through a process called “leveling” to begin endgame content (see Endgame). The process of progressing to maximum level provides a player with all the tactics that the player will need to be a quality contributor to a group. As a player earns experience toward maximum level, tactics are earned one by one. A player can then take the time testing out any new tactics earned as they progress to the next level of the game. By the time a player reaches the maximum level, all the tactics are earned and the player should be proficient with all of them and ready to use the tactics for raiding with a guild.

Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game: This is a video game genre. One of the most interesting things about this genre is that because thousands of people play it at the same time, the game is perpetual. A player may stop for the day in an MMORPG, but the game continues to evolve and change because of all the other players who are still online.

Player versus Environment (PvE): Typically known as raiding or accessing a dungeon, this is when players tend to join a group of 2 – 40 players to interact with non-player characters (NPCs) that were created by Blizzard Entertainment. The encounters are scripted, so players often succeed through repetitive interactions with this PvE environment. A learning curve exists based on how difficult a raid Blizzard designed. Raiding content is transparent and progressive. A guild has to complete the easier content as designed by Blizzard Entertainment to gain enough loot (See Loot) to enhance their characters and move on to more difficult raiding projects.

Successfully completing an interaction is referred to as “downing a boss” in most encounters.

Player versus Player (PvP): Player versus Player is the opposite of PvE. In these encounters, the majority of interactions are between players only with limited intervention by Blizzard Entertainment. There are no scripted, repeated encounters. Each interaction will be different because a player can not anticipate what the opposing player(s) will do.

Pick Up Group: A Pick Up Group, also known as a PUG, is any raid that involves players who are not part of the same guild. In some cases, these temporary partnerships involve a guild that was one or two players short of having their 10 or 25 man raid. In other cases, Pick Up Groups consist of every player on the raid being a stranger to one another and placed together through Blizzard's group finder tool. The fewer strangers there are in a raid, the harder content that group can typically pursue. This is why only guilds pursue the hardest content in the game – no PUGs offer a guild a higher chance to succeed through repetitive interactions with other members of the raid roster, and no strangers.

Raid: A raid, also known as a dungeon, or an instance, is a virtual location where people meet to complete objectives collectively that could not be completed by the individual. The more difficult raids must be completed by a guild as it is impossible to coordinate the strategy necessary for completion with a group of strangers. Raids can consist of anywhere between 10 and 40 players. The most common raid size is currently a 10-man group. As a guild gains in loot, knowledge, and preparation for the next step, the guild leader has the ultimate decision on whether or not the raid group is ready to expand their scope to include new raid content. As noted in the paper, *Raiding, Realism, and Knowledge Production in a Massively Multiplayer Online Game* by Alex Golub is a quality introduction for beginners to learn more about the specifics of raiding.

Raid Strategy: Raiding includes repetitive, scripted encounters created by Blizzard Entertainment. When guilds finish a newly added raid, members of the successful group will typically post videos with commentary and strategies on YouTube (tgnWorldofWarcraft, 2011; MethodNetwork, 2012) so other guilds can gain familiarity with proven raid methods and build the knowledge into their strategy. The other strategy is typically a hands-on trial and error approach.

Repair: *World of Warcraft* developers created the ability to repair as a way to set a risk to balance an opportunity. Every time a player fights in the game (a risk), a small amount of damage to the player's armor occurs. If a player takes a big enough risk that causes the player to die, a greater amount of damage occurs to that player's armor. Repairing the armor costs virtual money. Therefore the bigger the risk a player takes, the more likely the player will virtually die and pay a higher virtual cost to repair the armor. If a player does not routinely repair the armor on his or her character, the character eventually reaches a point where the weapons break and the character is useless until repairing occurs.

Server: A computer system dedicated to serve the needs of other users on the network. In *World of Warcraft*, there are over 100 servers available for players to choose from. A server is a defined space isolated for players on that specific server. Servers receive names (i.e. Wildhammer or Kalecgos) to differentiate them from one another. Servers can be explained as pockets of people. These pockets control for time zone and prevent lagging service to the gaming community. Upon creating a character, a player can choose what server he or she wishes to play on. Many people who are friends in real life with other *World of Warcraft* players will share server information so they can play together in the game.

Virtual Money: Virtual money in *World of Warcraft* has three values: copper, silver, and gold.

10000 copper = 100 silver = 1 gold.

APPENDIX B

PARTINGTON, PELLEGRINELLI, AND YOUNG (2005)

PROGRAM MANAGER ATTRIBUTES AND MATURITIES

Seventeen Attributes at Four Levels	Level 1: Concern for Delivery of Programme Scope	Level 2: Concern for Wider Organizational Impact of Programme	Level 3: Concern for Achievement of High-Level Programme Outcomes	Level 4: Concern for Development of Strategic Capabilities
<i>Relationship between self and work</i>				
S1. Granularity of Focus	Well-planned detail	Summary plan and broad understanding of internal impact outside project	Level 2 plus personal involvement in selected detail when deemed necessary, for stakeholder benefits	Level 3 plus strong future orientation and understanding of external context
S2. Emotional Attachment	Detached, focused	Need to be associated with successful delivery of organizational benefits	Passionately committed to achievement of programme outcomes	Committed to delivery of external outcomes; Able to disconnect
S3. Disposition for Action	Trouble-shooter; Procedural	Proactive, analytical; Procedural	Experimental, reflective; Flexible approach to programme rules and procedures	Intuitively reconfigures and realigns the organization; Makes the programme rules
S4. Approach to Role Plurality	Adopts a focused, single role	Fulfills multiple roles, but is uncomfortable with role conflict	Copes by adopting a clear position when roles potentially conflict	Takes on multiple roles to integrate divergent interests
<i>Relationship between self and others</i>				
O1. Relationship with the Team	Supportive and responsive to requests for help	Seeks detachment; uses need to know approach to interactions	Social, inclusive, paternal, but prepared to drive hard	Confidence-inspiring leader with charisma and credibility who can get people to modify their natural behavior
O2. Approach to Conflict and Divergence	Not considered legitimate - seeks procedural solution	Considered legitimate - seeks procedural solution	Considered legitimate - seeks negotiated solution	Encourages creative solution through subtle facilitation
O3. Education and Support	Helps others solve their problems	Directs others where to look to solve their problems	Coaches in how to influence	Coaches in context to enable influence
O4. Use of Questions	Own clarification	1+ challenges others	2+ encourages creative thinking	3+ redefine problem; reframe purpose
O5. Expectations of Others	Expects contracted effort	Expects special effort when required	Exploits individuals' talents	Extends individuals' talents
<i>Relationship between self and programme environment</i>				
E1. Adaptive Intent	Do what has worked in the past	Adapts self to suit environment	Adapts environment to suit self	Adapts environment to suit purpose
E2. Awareness of Organizational Capabilities	Assumes departments can deliver	Aware of shortcomings. Pushes for delivery	Aware of shortcomings, prepared to go outside without hesitation	Aware and prepared to go outside after exploring internal possibilities
E3. Approach to Risk	Analyze, report, monitor. Manage out internal risks	Attempt to manage out all risks	Prepare extreme contingency	Be ready for consequences of failure
E4. Approach to Face-To-Face Communications	Report objective facts in consistent style	Provide analysis and opinions in consistent style	Level 2 plus sell vision of outcome in style more sensitive to audience	Level 3 plus cultural sensitivity
E5. Approach to Governance	Use standardized reporting hierarchy	Create stable support structures both ways	Adapt/create control procedures to specific/dynamic situations	Embedding programme in organizational management structures
E6. Attitude to Scope	Defined until changes authorized	Influences scope through cost benefit analysis	Chooses among trialed alternatives	Shaped to meet emerging and changing needs
E7. Attitude to Time	Schedule driven; reschedule when necessary	Planning for possible work, recognizing mobilization time	Aware of the rate at which the environment can absorb or accommodate change	Conscious of issues of timeliness and maturity
E8. Attitude to Funding	Budget driven	Points out consequences of underfunding	Aware of budget ambiguities and financial uncertainty	Creates budget from achievement

APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEWEES

Campa: Campa started playing *WoW* during Beta testing and bought the game when it was first released in November, 2004. He stopped playing in December, 2011. He estimates that he has at least 500 days played in the game. He only noted being a guild leader during Vanilla *WoW* and that was the role he chose to use for his interview.

Arkonis: Arkonis played *WoW* from November 2004 until mid-2010. He estimates that he has approximately 420 days played in the game. He participated in roles of guild member, guild leader, raid leader (Vanilla *WoW* specifically), and class leader. He assumed the role of guild leader for this interview.

Podis: Podis played *WoW* during the Beta testing and bought the game on the day of release in November, 2004. He stopped playing in February, 2011. He estimates that he has over 400 days played. He's held the roles of officer, raid leader, and guild leader. He completed his interview from the raid leader perspective.

Dizkord: Dizkord played *WoW* from November 2004 until early 2012. He estimates that he has at least 300 days played in the game. He participated in roles of guild leader and guild member and made it a point to say he's never played as a raid leader. His interview is from the perspective of a guild leader with interweaving points from a guild member perspective.

Justinaino: Justinaino began playing *WoW* in late 2006 and stopped playing in the beginning of 2011. He estimates that he has approximately 600 days played in the game. He's held the self-declared titles of problem solver, guild leader, loot councilor and negotiator. He requested to be interviewed from the perspective of guild leader.

Skooney: Skooney started playing *WoW* upon its release in November, 2004. He stopped playing in mid-2011. He estimates that he has between 200 and 240 days played. He held both guild leader and guild officer roles in the game and wished to be interviewed as a guild officer.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR *WORLD OF WARCRAFT* RAID LEADERS

- What is your name?
- How long have you been playing MMOs?
- What MMO titles did you play?
- How many characters do you have at max level in *World of Warcraft*?
- How many days played do you have in the game?
- What was your highest leadership role in *WoW*?
- Was Raid Leader your favorite position? If so, I have some further questions.
- How long did you hold that position?
- Tell me a bit about your favorite guild leader.
- What did they do to make your experience as a raid leader better?
- Can you list some specific skills they provided to make your experience as raid leader better?
- Tell me a bit about your least favorite guild leader
- Can you tell me some specific skill differences that made this guild leader less appealing and the other guild leader the best when it comes to making sure you can do your job properly?
- Can you tell me some specific skill differences that made this guild leader less appealing and the other guild leader the best when it comes to making the guild run efficiently?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR *WORLD OF WARCRAFT* GUILD LEADERS

- What is your name?
- How long have you been playing MMOs?
- What MMO titles did you play?
- How many characters do you have at max level in *World of Warcraft*?
- How many days played do you have in the game?
- What was your highest leadership role in *WoW*?
- Was Guild Leader your favorite position? If so, I have some further questions.
- How long did you hold that position?
- Tell me a bit about what made you a good guild leader
- How would you differ from the worst leader you've ever been under the leadership of?
What makes you a good guild leader and that person a bad guild leader?
- Can you tell me some specific skill differences that made this guild leader less appealing and the other guild leader the best when it comes to making the guild run efficiently?
- Tell me a story about managing your raid leader(s). What did you do to make their job easier?

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR *WORLD OF WARCRAFT*

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

- When did you start playing *World of Warcraft*?
- How many characters do you have at max level?
- How many days played do you estimate that you have?
- How many hours per week average did you play at your max?
- How many hours per week average did you play at your min?
- Tell me about Vanilla *WoW*. What was the max level? What were the guilds and raids like?
- Tell me about the first expansion, *Burning Crusade*. What was the max level? What changed about raiding? What changed about guilds? How did that affect leadership roles?
- Tell me about the second expansion, *Wrath of the Lich King*. What was the max level? What changed about raiding? What changed about guilds? How did that affect leadership roles?
- Tell me about the third expansion, *Cataclysm*. What was the max level? What changed about raiding? What changed about guilds? How did that affect leadership roles?
- Tell me about the fourth expansion, *Mists of Pandaria*. What do you know about the max level? What do you know about the expected changes to raiding and guilds? How do you expect that to affect leadership roles?
- If you were to create a glossary of terms, how would you briefly define these words?
 - Player versus Environment
 - Player versus Player

- Endgame
- MMORPG
- Guild Leader
- Raid Leader

APPENDIX G

ATTRIBUTE COMPARISON

After completing the Supply Company interviews, I quickly realized that more interviews are necessary to map all 68 maturity levels to the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) competency model, but I did gather enough examples from the workplace interviews to provide 16 illustrations that pair well with 16 of the 17 attributes from the Partington, Pellegrinelli, and Young (2005) model. I used the same process to gather Supply Company interview examples as I did in the *WoW* interview process. A significant finding for this preliminary review was that many Supply Company interview samples were similar to the topics discussed in *WoW* interviews. For the results below, the program manager has the initials, R.S. while the project manager has the initials, G.S.

Supply Company Interviews

Granularity of Focus

“I look to take what we do today and make it better tomorrow” (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Relationship with Team

“We are changing things all the time with this company.... the most important thing is how to change the behavior in a positive way but still let the person know that we don’t want conflicts happening” (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Conflict and Divergence

“There should be nothing in a performance review that the employee didn’t know about ahead of time, and if there is, I wasn’t doing my job. The same goes for my boss and the managers above him” (G. S., personal

WoW Interviews

Granularity of Focus

He was capable of transitioning his guild and policies beforehand to maintain a successful raiding program (Wankel, 2010).

Relationship with Team

With only 10 players allowed to enter these raids, many times players are asked to switch the composition of their play style for a greater probability of success based on the necessary strategy (Wankel, 2010).

Conflict and Divergence

In an example provided by Reeves and Read (2009), a guild leader had to make a decision based on the results of a recent raid; an officer wanted to kick an underperforming raider out of the guild. Removing the person from the guild (Wankel, 2010).
communication, July 12, 2012).

Expectations of Others

“Managers should be able to take the goals of the organization and share them with employees in a way that a. made them understand it and b. made them excited about it” (R.S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Approach to Risk

“[The senior program manager] was the type of person who could make success out of failure. You could pass your ideas, you could run your ideas to him and he would play devil’s advocate just to see if you really thought this through – then he would say go for it. And if it failed, it failed. At least we all would know the reason why and learn from it” (G. S., personal

would have been the easiest solution but “[t]he leader said a better method would be to first make sure that the player was aware of his mistakes and had a chance to fix his poor play” (p. 158).

Expectations of Others

Examples of talent extension include asking guild members to be raid leaders, DKP trackers, class leaders, website builders, or recruitment officers for the betterment of the guild (Reeves & Read, 2009).

Approach to Risk

“Everyone was comfortable with the high likelihood of failure. Why? Death to their characters did occur. But that was quickly followed by ‘Let’s try that again’” (Reeves & Read, 2009, p. 165).

communication, July 12, 2012).

Face to Face Communication

“Communication skills are important. Specifically the ability to listen and the ability to talk to people. Try to align their goals with our goals. You know communicating them in a way that people are excited to be working on the organizational goals” (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Emotional Attachment

“Being able to work with people, being able to understand people. Being able to communicate with people.... A lot of employees are frustrated, I know because I talk to them!” (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Self and Work – Disposition for Action

one more thing for adaptability is just listening and really understanding an idea. Not jumping to conclusions but really listening to an idea and assessing

Face to Face Communication

The guild leadership is responsible for setting the structure of the guild and the raid along with what type of image it wants for its guild. Perhaps more importantly than setting that structure, the guild leadership needs to be able to communicate it to the game community so that it can recruit like-minded individuals (Wankel, 2010, p. 39).

Emotional Attachment

“She (guild leader) provided me with direct communication, even offering me her home phone number so I could reach her for questions when she was offline” (Podis, personal communication, June 23, 2012).

Self and Work – Disposition for Action

A good guild leader needs to be adaptive and have malleability (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

a decision about it (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Approach to Role Plurality

“There are people that I report to so I have to look for things that they are looking at and thinking about what they prize in people and display those skills, but at the same time working with my supervisors and employees in the department and understanding how to work with each individual” (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Education and Support

[Program Managers have to be] able to take the goals of the organization and share them with employees in a way that A. made them understand it and B. made them excited about it (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Adaptive Intent

“Good supervisors (project managers) who become managers (program

Approach to Role Plurality

“You can’t just be one thing. You have to fill all the gaps” (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

Education and Support

“She (guild leader) worked with players and encouraged them to be a better player not just for the team but for the guild – pay good deeds forward” (Dizkord, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

Adaptive Intent

“No matter what, you have to have the ability to shift your environment to suit

managers) are the ones who can say this is what I am working on, this is who I communicated with and why, this is how I am trying to make the organization better” (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Attitude to Scope

I look to take what we do today and make it better tomorrow. As a supervisor (project manager), they tend to have a lot of the same operations responsibility but I look at it from a greater scope to make decisions (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Attitude to Time

“There are some things, some ideas that I truly didn’t believe in or thought would work very well and I was able to push back and challenge the people who had those ideas. And sometimes I was able to figure out more about that idea and in the end agree with the idea. And sometimes that person said, you know

the needs of your vision” (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

Attitude to Scope

“We basically based it (the vision of the program) on what strategies came out and what was said of the strategies, we would determine... if we could progress based on the resources we had (Justinaino, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

Attitude to Time

“A good guild leader has to have constitution and conviction when talking to their team and be aware of time and personal tendencies to be a good leader” (Skooney, personal communication, July 2, 2012).

what, maybe this isn't the best idea. So in the end it came down to knowing when to pick your battles" (R. S., personal communication, July 9, 2012).

Use of Questions

"He (program manager) was trying to have the people who have to do the job explain to him what the issues were, and cared about the every day functions of people and what could management do to make it better" (G. S., personal communication, July 12, 2012)

Organizational Capabilities

"The best manager (program manager) I ever had, was not here for very long, because he went against the flow.... He was looking for more flexibility and adaptability" (G. S., personal communication, July 12, 2012).

Use of Questions

"I spent a fair bit of time recently organising and posting a variety of information for our guild members for the Mists expansion onto our forums" (Virtutis, Extra Mists Info, 2012).

Organizational Capabilities

"Having the deaf player create macros that indicate what he/she needs and using a raid warning to communicate those needs is also not difficult. Sure, it may take a little extra time before a fight to get those macros set up, but every player, deaf or not, who is an asset to your raid and guild is worth those extra few minutes" (Solaeris, Dealing with the Deaf, 2012).

Governance

“I would have to say that when talking to the VP of the company I might not ask them the same types of questions that I would ask my immediate supervisor because they might not know me as well or know my experiences as well and in some ways I might be scared to ask the quote unquote stupid question. But in someways I want to say that this organization there is no such thing as a stupid questions. We would rather overcommunicate and do a lot of information sharing” (R. S., personal communication, July 12, 2012).

Funding

“Except for the yearly budgeting, we do not deal with financials in this role” (R. S., personal communication, July 12, 2012).

This was the one attribute that I could not make a definite connection based on the interviews

Governance

Guild leader Virtutis shared this information on the *World of Warcraft* forums, a governance-regulated organizational management structure, in hopes that other guild leaders and players would make use of the information for their raid programs – “I thought I would at least make the link public here as well, for anyone wanting some more Mists Information” (Virtutis, Extra Mists Info, 2012).

Funding

“In my guild, I allow raiders a pretty hefty amount of g-repairs (guild repairs), somewhere in the 250-300g (virtual money) region to take care of our

progression wipes. I give vets and their alts about 100g a day. Pure casuals get 50g a day for their dungeon runs and new members get nothing until they put in a bit of time” (Partyongarth, Guild Repairs, 2012).