



Executive level decision styles and learning strategies of volunteer leaders  
by Robert James Moretti

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education  
Montana State University  
© Copyright by Robert James Moretti (1994)

Abstract:

This study was concerned with understanding the learning strategies and the decision styles of volunteer presidents or chairpersons of nonprofit organizations. The study also looked at the relationship between decision styles, learning strategies, and participants' gender, age, education, and experience.

Seventy volunteers were given the Decision Style Inventory (DSI), the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS), and a demographics questionnaire. All variables were correlated to determine the degree of relationship among them. Additionally, two groups were formed based on combined analytical and conceptual scores from the Decision Style Inventory. A score of 170 or higher placed the participant in the typical leaders group while those scoring below 170 were placed in the not typical leaders group. A discriminant analysis was conducted to determine the relationship certain variables had on each group.

According to combined analytical and conceptual scores on the Decision Style Inventory, 25 participants (36%) were classified as typical leaders while 45 (64%) were classified as not typical leaders.

The correlation analysis indicated that there were no significant relationships between any of the single variables used in this study. The discriminant analysis indicated that a participant's SKILLS scores, specifically the external aids score from the Memory category, the adjusting score from the Metacognition category, and the assumptions score from the Critical Thinking category, could all be combined to predict group membership with 73% accuracy. Additionally, more participants utilized the Behavioral decision style (30%) and the Resource Management learning strategy (40%) than any of the other possibilities.

Recommendations were made for nonprofit organizations, communities, and volunteers. Recommendations related to enhancing the selection process for leaders, volunteer leader's learning strategies, improving communications, internships, mentoring, training, networking, civic involvement, adequate legislation, and empowerment.

EXECUTIVE LEVEL DECISION STYLES  
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES OF  
VOLUNTEER LEADERS

by

Robert James Moretti

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Bozeman, Montana

November 1994

© COPYRIGHT

by

Robert James Moretti

1994

All Rights Reserved

D378  
M8179

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Robert James Moretti

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

11/28/94  
Date

Robert A. Fellner  
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

11/28/94  
Date

Jane Mellinger  
Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

12/11/94  
Date

Rd Brown  
Graduate Dean

## STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. I further agree that copying of this thesis is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for extensive copying or reproduction of this thesis should be referred to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, to whom I have granted "the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute my dissertation for sale in and from microfilm or electronic format, along with the right to reproduce and distribute my abstract in any format in whole or in part."

Signature

Robert James Moretto

Date

21 NOV 1994

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding advice and assistance received from each member of my doctoral committee. I am most appreciative for the help that I received from my committee chairman, Dr. Robert Fellenz.

I am grateful to my fellow classmates who have all stood with me throughout this study providing advice, encouragement and support.

Most of all I want to thank my two children, Angie and Tony, and my wife Muriel for all of the support and love that they provided. I am especially grateful to Muriel for her patience and understanding. Without her this study would not have been possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
ABSTRACT .....	ix
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background of the Problem .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	7
Purpose of the Study .....	9
Research Questions .....	9
Significance of the Study .....	10
Definition of Terms .....	11
Delimitations of the Study .....	13
Limitations of the Study .....	13
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	15
Volunteerism .....	15
Leadership .....	18
Decision Styles .....	24
Directive .....	26
Analytical .....	27
Conceptual .....	27
Behavioral .....	28
Learning Strategies .....	31
Metacognition .....	33
Metamotivation .....	34
Memory .....	35
Critical Thinking .....	36
Resource Management .....	38
Summary .....	40

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

	Page
3. PROCEDURES .....	43
General .....	43
Population .....	45
Sample .....	45
Instruments .....	46
Demographics Questionnaire .....	46
Decision Style Inventory .....	47
Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies .....	48
Validity .....	49
Decision Style Inventory .....	50
Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies .....	53
Reliability .....	55
Decision Style Inventory .....	55
Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies .....	56
Data Analysis .....	57
Method .....	57
Statistics .....	61
4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY .....	64
Participants .....	64
Education .....	64
Experience .....	65
Nonprofit Organizations .....	65
Leadership Training .....	66
Organizational Training .....	67
Reasons for Accepting Volunteer Position .....	68
Instruments .....	68
Decision Style Inventory .....	69
Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies .....	69
Correlations .....	71
Discriminant Analysis .....	73



TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

	Page
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	83
Introduction .....	83
Summary of Findings .....	84
Research Questions .....	85
Other Research Issues .....	87
Conclusions .....	90
Characteristics of Volunteer Leaders .....	90
Training of Volunteer Leaders .....	91
Learning Strategies of Volunteer Leaders .....	91
Relationship between Learning Strategies and Decision Styles of Volunteer Leaders .....	92
Recommendations .....	93
Nonprofit Organizations .....	93
Volunteer Leaders .....	95
Communities .....	96
Recommendations for Further Studies .....	96
REFERENCES .....	98
APPENDICES .....	103
Appendix A	
Volunteer Leader Questionnaire .....	104
Appendix B	
Decision Style Inventory .....	106
Appendix C	
Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies .....	109
Appendix D	
List of Organizations Included in the Study .....	117

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Basic DSI Style Patterns .....	30
2. Typical Range of Decision Style Scores .....	48
3. Mean Values for the Composite Sample of 428 Individuals .....	51
4. Means and Standard Deviations for Total Sample and Subgroups .....	52
5. Means of Demographic Questionnaire Data for All Participants .....	66
6. Summary of Responses to Training Questions .....	67
7. DSI Means and Standard Deviations Summary .....	69
8. SKILLS Means and Standard Deviations Summary .....	70
9. Volunteer Leaders' Matrix of Correlation Coefficients .....	72
10. Volunteer Leaders' Group Means and Standard Deviations .....	75
11. Summary of Selected Discriminant Variables .....	76
12. Structure Matrix for Discriminating Variables .....	77
13. Discriminant Analysis Actual vs. Predicted Group Membership .....	81
14. Means and Standard Deviations for Discriminant Analysis Variables .....	82
15. List of Organizations Included in the Study .....	118

## ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with understanding the learning strategies and the decision styles of volunteer presidents or chairpersons of nonprofit organizations. The study also looked at the relationship between decision styles, learning strategies, and participants' gender, age, education, and experience.

Seventy volunteers were given the Decision Style Inventory (DSI), the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS), and a demographics questionnaire. All variables were correlated to determine the degree of relationship among them. Additionally, two groups were formed based on combined analytical and conceptual scores from the Decision Style Inventory. A score of 170 or higher placed the participant in the typical leaders group while those scoring below 170 were placed in the not typical leaders group. A discriminant analysis was conducted to determine the relationship certain variables had on each group.

According to combined analytical and conceptual scores on the Decision Style Inventory, 25 participants (36%) were classified as typical leaders while 45 (64%) were classified as not typical leaders.

The correlation analysis indicated that there were no significant relationships between any of the single variables used in this study. The discriminant analysis indicated that a participant's SKILLS scores, specifically the external aids score from the Memory category, the adjusting score from the Metacognition category, and the assumptions score from the Critical Thinking category, could all be combined to predict group membership with 73% accuracy. Additionally, more participants utilized the Behavioral decision style (30%) and the Resource Management learning strategy (40%) than any of the other possibilities.

Recommendations were made for nonprofit organizations, communities, and volunteers. Recommendations related to enhancing the selection process for leaders, volunteer leader's learning strategies, improving communications, internships, mentoring, training, networking, civic involvement, adequate legislation, and empowerment.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Problem

This study was concerned with understanding the learning strategies and the decision styles of volunteer leaders. The leaders this study focused on were the presidents or chairpersons of nonprofit organizations large enough to have operating budgets exceeding \$25,000 annually.

Adult leaders are constantly faced with choices and decisions both at work and in their everyday living. How individuals react to these situations depends on such things as their experiences, training, habits, and the environment in which the situation occurs. According to Rowe and Mason (1987), "most of our lives, we do things that come naturally without reflecting on them very much. Sometimes these habits work for us, and sometimes they do not" (p. 8). They further reported that the way in which individuals deal with these decision situations reflects their decision style. Likewise, when people need to learn about a task, they employ certain learning strategies. Fellenz (1993) reported that "learning strategies are the techniques or skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a

learning task" (p. 1). Fellenz also stated that frequently little thought is given to the selection of these strategies.

The adult volunteer leaders that give little thought to decision styles and learning strategies may take actions that affect individuals other than themselves. Moreover, an organization depends upon its executive leadership for survival and success in achieving its goals and mission. O'Connell (1985), in discussing the legal responsibilities of an organization's board of directors, stated,

Whether it is a service or a cause-oriented membership association, the board has the principal responsibility for fulfillment of the organization's mission and the legal accountability for its operations.  
(p. 20)

How well these executive leaders learn about pending tasks and how effectively they make decisions may be the difference between an organization's success or failure. O'Connell (1985), talking about the organization president, further stated,

You are the person morally responsible for your public agency. No matter how inadequate you may feel on the job, or even if you have people to whom you can delegate, you are the person who is accountable to your fellow citizens for the expenditure of their dollars contributed to help your agency pursue its service to society.  
(p. 33)

Our society is made up of three sectors that all function to serve the needs of people. These sectors include government, business, and the nonprofit sectors. John Gardner (O'Connell, 1985) recognized this multiplicity of sectors when he wrote,

Americans have always believed in pluralism -- the idea that a free nation should be hospitable to many sources of initiative, many kinds of institutions, many conflicting beliefs and many competing

economic units. Our pluralism allows individuals and groups to pursue goals that they themselves formulate, and out of that pluralism has come virtually all of our creativity. (p. 14)

The nonprofit sector has been variously labelled the voluntary sector, the third sector, or the independent sector. It is difficult to find absolute definitions for the nonprofit sector or any of its other acceptable titles because it determines a special federal tax status by necessity that needs to be broad in definition.

Nonetheless, this researcher provided the following definition for the nonprofit sector or its acceptable labels of voluntary, third, or independent sectors.

Nonprofit sector organizations are federal income tax exempt organizations that are nongovernment and nonbusiness and which operate exclusively for one or more of these broad purposes: charitable, religious, scientific, literary, or educational. The importance of the nonprofit sector is emphasized by O'Connell (1985) and Boggs (1991). O'Connell wrote,

Many people don't understand how much volunteering means to our society, or even have a grasp of the dimensions of it, because this is an aspect of our national life that we take for granted and have never really felt a need to study. Now that there seems to be a growing realization that citizen participation is a vital part of our national character, there is a greater interest in having a clearer grasp of the facts, trends, and impact. (pp. 12-13)

Boggs, like O'Connell, recognized the importance of the nonprofit sector when he stated,

It bears repeating that all the important choices facing communities require politics and the skills and knowledge that go into defining the common good. Only some of these choices involve government. (p. 19)

Volunteerism is an essential and important ingredient of a successful society and a duty that needs to be expected from its citizens. Boggs (1991) states, "Citizenship is an adult responsibility and requires lifelong learning to be adequately fulfilled" (p. 67). In turn, citizens have a requirement to be volunteers or else they should expect the unpleasant result of a dysfunctional community. Describing the responsibilities of citizenship, Boggs wrote, "At its core, responsible citizenship involves thoughtful evaluation of and responsible involvement in public issues" (p. 83).

Being an executive responsible for leading a volunteer organization is not an easy task. These leaders are not paid and usually have at their disposal limited budgets for conducting the operation of these organizations. Volunteer leaders typically already have a full-time career and cannot devote full attention or time to their volunteer job.

Volunteer organizations need to select the right executive to serve as their president or chairperson in order to enhance the chance of success at meeting organizational goals. O'Connell (1985) stated,

One mistake organizations make is to automatically recruit as leader the expert on the subject without regard to his or her organizing skills. We eagerly recruit people to do organizing jobs for which they may be utterly incapable. (p. 36)

The "fit" between a person's style and a job is sometimes referred to as "alignment," and numerous authors maintain that it influences the success or failure of an organization. Rowe and Mason (1987) stated that style is

the predisposition of a person to think and to act in a specific way in a given situation -- a preferred mode of thinking, often to the exclusion of others. The manner of thinking or focusing determines one's inherent ability to manage effectively. (p. 18)

Continuing with their discussion of "fit," Rowe and Mason (1987) defined alignment as,

The condition in which one's style is effectively matched with the demands of the environment in which one must act. Proper alignment leads to positive feedback, increased self-confidence, higher motivation, and deeper commitment, all resulting in better performance and satisfaction. (p. 11)

Many individuals are not properly suited for the positions they hold in organizations, and others have much more potential than their careers may demand. In explaining the need to fit an executive's style to the demands of an organization, Levinson (1981) observed, "Fully 80 percent of all American workers in every job category may have jobs for which they are unsuited" (p. 296). Echoing a similar concern, O'Toole (1972) observed, "A significant number of American workers are dissatisfied with the quality of their working lives" (p. xv).

Civic education and involvement are important to the success and quality of volunteer organizations and our democratic society. Boggs (1991) wrote, "Participation through discussion as a prelude to action is at the heart of both adult education and democracy" (p. 12). Boggs (1991), Barber (1984), and Matthews (1989) espouse the importance of democracy, adult education, and civic involvement. In fact, Boggs (1991) described adult civic education as

the purposeful and systematic effort to develop in adults the skills and dispositions to function effectively as citizens in their



communities as well as in the larger world. Increasing participation in the democratic process and using such participation as a catalyst for learning are desirable outcomes of adult civic education. (p. 5)

Barber (1984, p. 158) advocated "strong democracy" as an ideal in which civic education throughout the lifespan, citizen participation, and public deliberation are the essential ingredients. For citizens, "participation has as its primary function the education of judgement." Furthermore, democratic communities, according to Matthews (1989), require a civic infrastructure, a host of nongovernmental associations, that takes on some of the responsibility for the management of society as a whole. These associations, in Matthews' words,

provide public environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, the values of cooperation, and civic virtue. (p. 82)

Actions taken by volunteer organizations usually are determined by the executive leadership of these groups. These decisions are not only important to the success or failure of the organization but also to the communities in which they serve. The executive leaders of these organizations should be properly suited for this task. Austere funding and a shortage of skilled volunteers make effective management difficult, if not virtually impossible.

Are executive level managers available or willing to devote valuable time to the leadership of volunteer organizations, especially when these positions are traditionally non-paid?

### Statement of the Problem

Decision styles are the personal, characteristic ways all individuals choose to make decisions. According to Rowe and Mason (1987), another way to look at decision style is as "the way that we perceive and comprehend stimuli and how we choose to respond" (p. 18). These styles are related to an individual's personality and background, and they contribute to effective performance. According to Rowe and Mason (1987),

There are two key aspects that describe how our mind works: its cognitive complexity and its value orientation. A person may have either a low tolerance for ambiguity (that is, a high need for structure) or a high tolerance for ambiguity. Values may be oriented either to human and social concerns or to task and technical concerns. Combining these two dimensions yields four basic styles: the directive, analytical, conceptual and behavioral. (pp. 3-4)

"Learning strategies are the skills and techniques that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a real-life learning task" (Fellenz, 1993, p. 1). Learning can depend on experiences, training, habits, and other things which may affect the success of the learning activity. These strategies include the categories of metacognition, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management.

If decision style and learning strategies can both depend on the background, training, habits, and experiences of the individual, then how the individual learns during these learning or decision experiences or situations provides a connection between one's decision style and learning strategy. Individuals develop their

decision styles by learning from past situations that are either successes or failures. How individuals learn during these situations, or, in other words, the learning strategies they employ during these situations, can determine whether the event is a success or failure. Learning is the key that determines what decision styles and learning strategies an individual will use. An individual's decision style and learning strategy are based on their exposure to knowledge, education, and interpersonal interaction. The way an individual perceives and comprehends stimuli then influences the techniques used to learn for the given situation.

The presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations are in positions of authority and their decisions have a direct impact on society. Important decisions are being made by these executive-level leaders that affect the well being and life styles of communities.

While both decision styles and learning strategies have been investigated separately, the decision styles and learning strategies of executive volunteer leaders and the relationship between their decision styles and learning strategies has not been studied. The question investigated in this study was: What is the relationship between the strategies used to learn by presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations and the styles they use to make decisions?

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what learning strategies and decision styles are used by presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations. This study determined the relationship between these learning strategies and decision styles by utilizing the statistical methods of correlation and discriminant analysis. This study also investigated whether demographic information such as age, gender, education, and experience have an effect on decision styles or learning strategies. The focus was to understand what learning strategies and decision styles were used by volunteer organizations' presidents or chairpersons.

### Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What learning strategies are utilized by presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations?
2. What decision styles are utilized by presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations?
3. Is there a relationship between the learning strategies and the decision styles utilized by presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations?
4. Do presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations use different learning strategies and decision styles based on their age, education, experience, or gender?

5. Are presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations typical leaders according to their Decision Style Inventory scores? Typical leaders are defined as those individuals who have a combined analytical and conceptual score of 170 or higher on the Decision Style Inventory.

#### Significance of the Study

The results of this study will enable volunteer organizations to determine what decision styles and learning strategies have been utilized by the top executive level (presidents or chairpersons) of volunteer organizations. An understanding of their decision styles and their learning strategies and whether there is a relationship between the two may help to improve success in future decision making and learning situations. This understanding could also help volunteer organizations determine the type of training that would be preferred by their executive leadership. Ultimately this information could assist in the selection of future volunteer leaders and in providing the types of learning techniques that are best suited to optimize effective volunteer leadership.

This study included both current and past chairpersons or presidents of nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations typically are organized for charitable, religious, scientific, literary, or educational purposes. Organizations with such purposes are pertinent to the proper functioning of citizenship in a democracy and are included in this study. The American Red Cross (1990), for

example, defines volunteers as individuals who reach out beyond the confines of their paid employment and of their normal responsibilities to contribute time and service to a not-for-profit cause in the belief that their activity is beneficial to others as well as satisfying to themselves (p. 4).

### Definition of Terms

Critical Thinking: Disciplined, self-directed thinking which exemplifies the perfection of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought (Paul, 1993, p. 33).

Decision Style: The way that one visualizes, thinks, and reacts to choices and situations when making a decision. A characteristic way of making decisions. The ways in which individuals deal with these decision situations reflect their decision style (Rowe & Mason, 1987, p. 2).

Leadership Training: Training that involves the directing and guiding of an organization.

Learning Strategies: The techniques or skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a learning task (Fellenz, 1993, p. 1).

Memory: The capacity of humans to retain information, to recall it when needed, and recognize its familiarity when they later see it or hear it again (Wingfield & Byrnes, 1981, p. 4).

Metacognition: The knowledge and control one has over one's own thinking and learning (Brown, 1982).

Metamotivation: The motivation of the individual to learn and to distinguish it from factors relating to reasons for participating in educational programs (Fellenz, 1993, p. 10).

Organizational Training: Training that involves learning about the purpose and mission of the organization.

Resource Management: The process of identification, evaluation, and use of resources relevant to the learning task.

Skunkworks: A highly innovative, fast moving, and slightly eccentric activity operating at the edges of the corporate world (Peters & Austin, 1985, pp. xii, xiii).

Synergy: The state in which the whole is more than the sum of the parts (Covey, 1991, p. 37).

Volunteer Chairperson/President: The person morally responsible for an organization or agency. The person who is accountable for the expenditure of the organization's dollars in the pursuit of its mission or service.

Volunteers: Individuals who reach out beyond the confines of their paid employment and of their normal responsibilities to contribute time and service to a not-for-profit cause in the belief that their activity is beneficial to others as well as satisfying to themselves (American Red Cross, 1990, p. 4).

### Delimitations of the Study

Organizational size is important as a determinate of the difficulty of the job of being chairperson or president of the organization. This study included those tax exempt organizations that have a United States Internal Revenue Service tax exemption number and are required to file an annual tax report. This requirement excludes organizations with annual revenues less than \$25,000. This study was limited to the City of Great Falls and the County of Cascade, both located in the State of Montana.

### Limitations of the Study

Gay (1987) described a limitation as

some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively affect the results or generalizability of the results but over which he or she probably has no control. (p. 108)

This researcher was unable to determine the actual number of nonprofit organizations with operating budgets of \$25,000 or more that are located in Great Falls and Cascade County. Neither the U.S. Internal Revenue Service nor the Montana Office of the Secretary of State are permitted to release data regarding the dollar amount of the operating budgets for nonprofit organizations. These organizations are required to be registered within the state that they operate and with the Internal Revenue Service to be legally identified as nonprofit organizations. Researcher knowledge, the Great Falls Area Chamber of



Commerce, the Big Sky Chapter of the American Red Cross, the United Way of Cascade County, residents of the study area, and volunteer study participants were all helpful in identifying the proper organizations and subjects for this study.

Rowe and Mason (1987) developed their description of a typical leader by utilizing presidents and chairpersons from throughout the country. This description was applied to the volunteer leaders utilized in this study. The subjects were assumed to have answered all three instruments (the Decision Style Inventory, the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies, and the questionnaire) honestly and accurately.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature related to four major areas that were essential to understanding the problem and subject matter of this study. These four areas included volunteerism, leadership, decision styles, and learning strategies.

#### Volunteerism

This review section aimed at understanding the importance of volunteerism. The United States is the only country in the world where giving and volunteering are pervasive characteristics of the total society (O'Connell, 1985, p. 5). O'Connell further added that the Pulitzer Prize historian Merle Curti said, "Emphasis on volunteer initiative . . . has helped give America her national character." O'Connell's close friend, former Health, Education and Welfare Secretary John W. Gardner wrote, "Virtually every significant social idea in this country has been nurtured in the nonprofit sector" (Gardner, 1983, p. xiv).

Although the voluntary sector also exists outside the United States, writers as early as De Tocqueville in 1835, following a visit to the United States (De Tocqueville, 1835/1969), and as recent as Gardner (1983) agreed that its diversity and strength are uniquely American in its extraordinary richness and

variety. It encompasses a remarkable array of American institutions -- libraries, museums, religious organizations, schools and colleges, organizations concerned with health and welfare, citizen action groups, neighborhood organizations, and countless other groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, the Urban League, the 4H Clubs, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Salvation Army, the United Way, and the Red Cross.

Max Lerner (1969), a noted educator, economist, and writer, stated that Americans join associations for a number of motives: to "get ahead," to "meet people" and "make contacts," to "get something done," to "learn something," and to "fill their lives."

The importance of the voluntary sector cannot be underestimated. This nation was founded by men of voluntary spirit who organized and lived in communities before any government was formed. According to the Great Falls Tribune, December 5, 1993 edition, Americans gave an astonishing \$102 billion to nonprofit organizations in 1992. O'Connell (1983) noted that more than half of the people in America serve as regular volunteers; that ninety percent of all giving in this country comes from individuals; and that about half of the donations come from families with incomes under \$20,000. John D. Rockefeller (1907) recognized the resources donated by the poor when he said, "Probably the most generous people in the world are the very poor, who assume each other's burdens in the crises which come so often to the hard pressed" (p. 112).

Merle Curti (1958) recalled the role of philanthropy in American education when he wrote:

When a group of progressive-minded merchants made possible the introduction of scientific study in our colleges in the mid-nineteenth century, a new era in our educational history was under way. The names of Lawrence, Sheffield, the younger Agassiz, Bussey, Peabody, Lick, Ryerson, Scripps and countless others made possible some of the most notable scientific work in our universities. Private initiative also got under way much needed vocational training, as the names of Rensselaer, Cooper, Pratt, Drexel and Carnegie, to name only a few, suggest. And philanthropists also made possible the establishment of the first professional schools of mines, business and journalism. (p. 171)

In adult education, too, private philanthropy laid the groundwork in helping people who wanted to know. The contributions of the Carnegie Corporation and of other foundations to adult education have both stimulated public action, improved the quality of that which existed and added new dimensions to the movement. (p. 173)

Despite the resources devoted to the voluntary sector it faces serious problems. Problems such as stringent tax regulations, greater expectations for service, escalated operating cost, poor leadership and management, and inflation have all resulted in serious financial trouble for many nonprofit institutions.

Gardner (1983) stated,

If private nonprofit institutions are to survive and retain their vitality, they must manage themselves well and serve community needs honestly and responsibly. Unfortunately, some nonprofit institutions are so poorly managed that they waste the money entrusted to them . . . . (p. xi)

In short, the human and institutional failures that afflict government and business are also present in the volunteer sector. This review of volunteerism defined the dimensions of the organizations that face volunteer leaders.

## Leadership

There are numerous authors who have written about leadership. The emphasis in this area of review was on effective methods that leaders utilize.

Discussions of leadership today evoke the principles of excellence and total quality. These two principles regarding effective leadership were reviewed concurrently in order to describe methods common to both areas. According to Covey (1991), the movement towards total quality as the operating model for businesses large and small, manufacturing and service industries alike, is increasing at an exponential rate because quality is widely seen as the key to American economic survival and success.

The keys to success according to Peters and Austin (1985), Deming (1992), Iacocca (1984), and Covey (1991) are found in communication, networking, and empowerment. Deming feels that the greatest waste in America is the failure to use the abilities of people. To be effective, leadership needs to empower people and their organizations to achieve their worthwhile objectives, in essence to become more effective at whatever they do.

Deming (1992) is credited with turning around the Japanese economy following the devastation of World War II. His premise rests upon the ability to clearly understand and accurately interpret the interaction of people with each other and with the systems in which they work and grow. Effective communication among people, management, and labor, between the company and its suppliers,

and between the customers and the organization is essential to total quality.

Deming's (1992) methods are summarized in the following 14 points:

1. Create consistency of purpose.
2. Adopt the new philosophy.
3. Cease dependence on inspection.
4. Stop awarding business based on price alone.
5. Constantly and forever improve the system of production and service.
6. Institute job training.
7. Teach and institute leadership.
8. Drive out fear.
9. Break down barriers between departments.
10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations and targets.
11. Eliminate quotas and goals.
12. Remove people barriers.
13. Encourage education and self improvement.
14. Involve everyone in the action plan.

Deming's 14 points emphasized communication at all levels. Three of Deming's 14 points emphasize training (#6), teaching (#7), and education (#13), all of which involve learning. His total quality model points out that leadership's job is to lead and that education plays an important role.

Steven Covey (1991) clearly recognized that the most important resource of any organization is its people. In organizations, people usually perform one of

three essential roles: producer, manager, or leader. Each role is vital to the success of the organization. As an example Covey (1991) wrote,

If there is no producer, great ideas and high resolves are not carried out. The work simply doesn't get done. Where there is no manager, there is role conflict and ambiguity; everyone attempts to be a producer, working independently, with few established systems or procedures. And if there is no leader, there is lack of vision and direction. People begin to lose sight of their mission. (p. 244)

Covey, like Deming, emphasizes the responsibilities of the individual to be an effective leader. Covey (1991, pp. 40-47) cited seven habits of effective leadership as follows:

Habit 1. Be Proactive - the Principle of Self-Awareness, Personal Vision, and Responsibility

Habit 2. Begin with the End in Mind - the Principle of Leadership and Mission

Habit 3. Put First Things First - the Principle of Managing Time and Priorities Around Roles and Goals

Habit 4. Think Win-Win - the Principle of Seeking Mutual Benefit

Habit 5. Seek First to Understand Before Being Understood - the Principle of Empathic Communication

Habit 6. Synergize - the Principle of Creative Cooperation

Habit 7. Sharpen the Saw - the Principle of Continuous Improvement

Covey's seven habits serve as both quality initiatives and excellence guidelines.

Covey's seven habits emphasize learning (#3, #5, and #7) and education (#4).

These habits provide personal and interpersonal effectiveness models for what Covey terms principle-centered leadership. Discussing principle-centered leadership Covey (1991) stated,

Principles apply at all time in all places. They surface in the form of values, ideas, norms, and teachings that uplift, ennoble, fulfill, empower, and inspire people. (p. 19)

Lee Iacocca, the chairman who saved Chrysler, used a slightly different approach when it came to leading or managing people, but one that still involved communicating and empowering. Iacocca practiced a quarterly review system that looked at the past accomplishments and upcoming goals of his personnel. Iacocca (1986) stated this system works for several reasons:

First, it allows a man to be his own boss and to set his own goals. Second, it makes him more productive and gets him motivated on his own. Third, it helps new ideas bubble to the top. (pp. 50-51)

Iacocca believed that this dialogue between people usually improves their working relationship.

Total quality starts at the top. The leadership of the organization must be intimately involved in the process to see that the quality paradigm is translated into the minds and hearts of everyone in the organization. One saying heard by this study's researcher at a symposium concerning total quality went as follows: "If you don't have it personally, you won't get it organizationally."

The idea of networking and communicating repeats itself time and again when people talk about management and leadership. John Naisbitt (1984) wrote:



We are substituting the network model of organizations and communication, which has its roots in the natural, egalitarian, and spontaneous formation of groups among like-minded people. Networks restructure the power and communication flow within an organization from vertical to horizontal. One network form, the quality control circle, will help revitalize worker participation and productivity in American business. (p. 281)

The concepts of superior customer service and constant innovation are built on a bedrock of listening, trust, and respect for the dignity and the creative potential of each person in the organization. The Peter's model of excellence closely parallels these quality concepts. His model of excellence depends on an organization's leaders taking care of customers, constantly innovating, and turning-on people. Peters and Austin (1985) understood the movement toward developing a new managing approach for America when they labelled it "in its skunkwork phase." Before this change American business was so tied up in techniques, devices, and programs that it forgot about people.

Peters and Austin (1985) reported, "Two of the most important basics of managerial success are pride in one's organization and enthusiasm for its works" (p. xix). Peters is credited with the management by wandering around (MBWA) technique which he claims keeps leaders in touch and is no more than common sense.

Similar to Naisbett' views, Peters and Austin also emphasized the need to network. The idea of networking was expressed by Peters and Austin (1985) when they stated,

Organizations need to be "no excuses" environments, where radical decentralization frees people to make anything happen, where training is provided, where extraordinary results are then routinely expected because the barriers to them have been cleared away. There is a certain militancy in the way values are protected and people are empowered to take possession of their achievements. (p. xix)

Peters and Austin (1985) described leadership as vision, cheerleading, enthusiasms, love, trust, verve, passion, obsession, consistency, the use of symbols, paying attention as illustrated by the content of one's calendar, out-and-out drama (and the management thereof), creating heroes at all levels, coaching, effectively wandering around, and numerous other things (p. 6).

When organizations and their employees engage in the process of clearly identifying and communicating to each other their respective principles, values, needs, mission, and vision, to the extent of overlap between the company and its employees in these areas, the opportunity for commitment, creativity, innovation, empowerment, and quality becomes activated (Covey, 1991, p. 270).

In summary, the methods required for effective leadership include communication, networking, and empowerment. An effective leader understands the importance of communications, networking, and empowerment. The number one resource available to organizations is people. This leader builds a complementary team based on mutual respect, with more concern on direction and results than with methods, systems, and procedures. This leader cares not only about the quality of the products and services, but also about the quality of people's lives and their relationships. These effective leadership methods and the

earlier review of volunteerism provided the backdrop against which to review decision styles and learning strategies.

### Decision Styles

This review of decision styles aimed at defining, understanding, and interpreting individual styles. An instrument used to measure decision style was also explained to help facilitate differences among individual volunteer leaders.

Over the years, a number of psychological tests have been developed to assess individual personality traits that may contribute to effective performance.

Carl Jung (1971), discussing his theory of psychological types stated,

These four functional types correspond to the obvious means by which consciousness obtains its orientation to experience. Sensation (i.e., sense perception) tells you something exists; Thinking tells you what it is; Feeling tells you whether it is agreeable or not; and Intuition tells you from whence it comes and where it is going. (p. 61)

Every volunteer leader has a characteristic way of making decisions -- a decision style. Rowe and Mason (1987) reported that the four basic decision styles are directive, analytical, conceptual, and behavioral. Rowe and Mason (1987), comparing their decision style theory to Jung's theory of psychological types, stated,

The styles that we have described as directive, analytical, behavioral, and conceptual can also be classified according to Jung's typology as ST (sensing/thinking), NT (intuiting/thinking), SF (sensing/feeling), and NF (intuiting/feeling), respectively. The association between decision style and Jung's theory has been established empirically by means of correlations with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. (p. 141)

The effectiveness of a leader has been tied to the style that is utilized.

According to Rowe and Mason (1987),

To be successful, an executive must know his or her style and be able to focus on achieving objectives in a frequently changing environment. In short, effective management requires matching the capabilities of individuals to the requirements of particular jobs. Many individuals hold positions or work in occupations that do not suit their personal style. (p. xi)

The Decision Style Inventory was developed by Rowe in 1981, and it helps as one of a number of ways an executive can identify what is required to achieve success (Rowe & Mason, 1987, p. 5). Decision style reflects the way that one visualizes and thinks about situations. It has to do with mental predisposition concerning personal objectives, what situations one avoids, what kinds of jobs one enjoys, what things one dislikes, how one communicates, and how one approaches problems and makes decisions. Patterns among these predispositions serve to describe one's style.

Rowe and Mason (1987) explained that the language of decision style provides concepts that can be used to describe one's mental predispositions to process information and to visualize and think about situations. When a problem confronts a person it is called a decision situation. Each decision situation has two key dimensions -- its structure and its elements. The structure may be either loose or complex. The elements are concern for people or focus on objects. Combining these two dimensions creates four basic categories of decision situations that

confront managers. The ways in which managers deal with these decision situations reflect their style.

Two key aspects that describe how the mind works are its cognitive complexity and its value orientation. A person may have either a low tolerance for ambiguity (that is, a high need for structure) or a high tolerance for ambiguity. Values may be oriented either to human and social concerns or to task and technical concerns. Combining the components of cognitive complexity and value orientation yields the four basic decision styles of directive, analytical, conceptual, and behavioral. These four basic decision styles are further described below.

### Directive

The directive style, which is associated with Jung's typology of ST (sensing/thinking), has low tolerance for ambiguity and is oriented to task and technical concerns. A person with this style implements operational objectives in a systematic and efficient way. Rowe and Mason (1987) described some of the traits people with the directive style display as follows:

The directive style resembles the style of the empiricist school. Facts for the directive style are reality, and there is a commensurate distaste for ideology. The person with the directive style believes that it is through the accumulation of and dealing with facts that true knowledge is acquired. Facts also serve as a kind of security blanket for the person with the directive style, assuaging the intense need for mastery and control. (pp. 32-33)

### Analytical

The analytical style, which is associated with Jung's typology of NT (intuiting/thinking), has a high tolerance for ambiguity and is oriented to task and technical concerns. Performance is achieved by means of analysis, planning, and forecasting. The analytical and the directive styles are both logical in their approach. Rowe and Mason (1987) described some of the traits people with the analytical style display as follows:

The analytical thinker generally tries to gain the broadest possible perspective of a problem, seeks to identify previously "taken for granted" underlying assumptions; exposes these assumptions to examination, and then argues for a new set of assumptions. This style tends to use a rather formal decision-making process, in which many possible alternatives are envisioned, each is carefully examined, and an evaluation is conducted to determine the optimal policy to follow. (p. 23)

### Conceptual

The conceptual style, which is associated with Jung's typology of NF (intuiting/feeling), has a high tolerance for ambiguity (considerable complexity) and is oriented to people and social concerns. Performance is achieved by exploring new options, forming new strategies, being creative, and taking risks. Rowe and Mason (1987) described some of the traits people with the conceptual style display as follows:

People who have a conceptual style are broad "system" thinkers who have expansive time horizons. They are able to deal with the past, the present, and the future simultaneously. Psychologically they have the longest "time span of discretion." They also generally have the greatest geographical reach and comprehension. People who

have conceptual style tend to value quality and prefer openness, curiosity, and a sharing of values among their colleagues. Characterized by a high need for achievement, this style requires recognition, praise, and constructive feedback. Most of all, however, the conceptual style needs freedom. (p. 25)

### Behavioral

The behavioral style, which is associated with Jung's typology of SF (sensing/feeling), has a low tolerance for ambiguity and is oriented to people and social concerns. Performance is based on focusing on people and their needs. The behavioral and the conceptual styles are less logical in their approach than the directive and analytical. Rowe and Mason (1987) described some of the traits people with the behavioral style display as follows:

The behavioral style is people oriented and exhibits a keen sensitivity on directed, personal feelings. People with this style tend to be empathetic and to accord worth and compassion to those with whom they work. Love is the word that best summarizes their caring for other people. They are good listeners -- attentive to the individual -- and good communicators. They prefer the "soft" data of personal experience over the so-called "hard" data of questionnaires, statistical calculations, and detached analysis. It is through direct personal experience that they come to know and to understand; they prefer face-to-face meetings and discussions to reports and memorandums. They try to be as supportive and empathetic to each individual as possible. (pp. 29, 30)

These four basic styles when used together describe combinations of styles.

Rowe and Mason (1987) commenting on style use stated,

Our studies show that a typical person has one or two "dominant" styles -- that is, he or she scores well above the average for those styles on the Decision Style Inventory. We also find that most people have one or two "backup," or supporting, styles as well. (p. 35)

Scores for different styles are combined to determine what positions or type of work is best suited for the individual. Alignment is achieved by matching one's style with the demands of the decision structure.

Generally people utilize their dominant and backup styles. Rowe and Mason (1987) reported,

Most of us in our daily lives use some backup styles in addition to our dominant styles. We are analytical when we study things carefully, conceptual when we create new ideas, behavioral when we engage in an intense relationship with another individual, and directive when we move into action to get things done. A truly flexible personality is one with a capacity in each of these pure styles (pp. 34-35)

A summary of seven basic patterns that are combinations of styles are shown in Table 1. The Decision Style Inventory has been completed by more than 10,000 individuals from which basic patterns have been developed. These patterns are then the averages of the population who have taken the Decision Style Inventory and placed within a range of scores of which the low end is shown as the minimum score required to be considered typical of the pattern. A basic pattern developed for senior executives or leaders is included in this table and has been underlined for easier reviewing. The combination of the analytical and conceptual styles with a score of 170 or higher describes the pattern typical of a senior executive or leader. Rowe and Mason (1987) defined a typical person as "one whose score is the average of the population" (p. 42).

In summary, the Decision Style Inventory is an instrument that is used to classify people according to the four basic styles. It also reveals complex patterns



of styles, showing dominant and backup styles. Instructions for completing the Decision Style Inventory are detailed in Appendix B.

Table 1. Basic DSI Style Patterns.

Pattern	Score	Typical of
Left brain (analytical + directive)	165 or higher	Science, finance, law
Right brain (conceptual + behavioral)	135 or higher	Psychology, teachers, artists
Idea orientation ( <u>analytical + conceptual</u> )	<u>170 or higher</u>	Senior executives, <u>leaders</u>
Action orientation (directive + behavioral)	130 or higher	Supervisors, sales people, athletes
Executive (conceptual + directive)	155 or higher	Entrepreneurs, cross- over executives
Staff (analytical + behavioral)	145 or higher	Technical managers
Middle management (directive + analytical + conceptual)	245 or higher	Flexible management style

Source: Rowe and Mason (1987, p. 52).

This review of decision styles narrowed the focus of this study to the individual level. Understanding a volunteer leader's decision style, which depends on experiences, training, habits, and the environment in which the situation occurs,

then leads to a review of learning strategies that also depend on and are affected by similar issues.

### Learning Strategies

This review provided background information and definitions for five areas of adult learning and 15 learning strategies associated with these five areas. An understanding of the learning strategies which volunteer leaders utilized provided an opportunity to compare these learning strategies to their decision styles.

People depend on certain skills or techniques to accomplish learning tasks. The choice of how one learns can come from experience, training, habits, or other areas and often this choice occurs without much thought. However, this choice can affect the degree of success in the learning activity.

Fellenz (1993) reported that learning strategies are "the techniques or skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a learning task" (p. 1). This definition is consistent with and therefore utilized for the purposes of this study. The effectiveness of learning strategies depends on the situation. Weinstein (1986) defines learning strategies "as behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning and that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (p. 315). Another learning specialist, McKeachie (Fellenz, 1993) emphasized the current attention to learning strategies when he wrote,

What is different today is that we have a better theoretical understanding of the reasons these study strategies work. Cognitive psychology has developed a set of laboratory research studies and

theoretical concepts that are much closer to the natural learning settings in which study strategies have been applied. (p. 1)

People are confronted daily with real-life situations that require solving, hence the term "real-life learning" is used because this learning is pursued for immediate application. These problems are different from academic situations in a number of ways. Some differences are in the recognition and definition of the problem for oneself without instructor involvement, and also these real-life situations are seldom well-structured and may not provide all relevant information. Basically, real world problems are more similar to or representative of real-life situations than academic situations.

An instrument used to assess learning strategies is the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS). This survey was developed by the staff of the Center for Adult Learning Research at Montana State University.

The Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS) ranks real-life learning strategy use according to how the individual assesses the importance of various strategies in their own individual learning situation scenarios. SKILLS assumes that five specific learning areas are prevalent in how adults engage in learning. These five include metacognition, or knowing about and directing one's own thinking and learning processes; metamotivation, the awareness of and control over factors that energize and direct (motivate) our learning; memory, which is the storage, retention, and retrieval of knowledge; critical thinking, which is disciplined, self-directed thinking which exemplifies the

perfection of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thought (Paul, 1993, p. 33); and resource management, which is the process of identification, evaluation, and use of resources relevant to the learning task.

To take SKILLS the individual reviews four different scenarios depicting real-life learning situations which necessitate various levels and types of learning. The individual answers 15 questions for each scenario which assess how likely they are to use specific learning skills or techniques in resolving that learning issue. Instructions for completing the SKILLS survey are detailed in Appendix C.

### Metacognition

Metacognition is the knowledge and control one has over one's thinking and learning (Brown, 1982). Metacognitive knowledge requires awareness of self, insight into requirements of the task, and adeptness at certain strategies.

The three SKILLS metacognition learning strategies are planning the learning, monitoring the learning process, and adjusting the learning process, all being interactive and dependent on each other. Definitions of these three strategies from Counter and Fellenz (1993, p. 6) are as follows: Metacognitive planning is analyzing the best way to proceed with a specific learning activity. Metacognitive monitoring is assessing how well one is proceeding through a learning project. Metacognitive adjusting is the modifying and revising done to learning plans in relationship to the learner's evaluation of the process.

### Metamotivation

Motivation in learning strategies is concerned with why an individual experiences a need or desire to learn and how this relates to factors effecting behavior. The expectation of success is as important a motivator for entry into self-directed learning tasks as it is for entry into programs.

Tough (1971) identified seven reasons or motivations that cause the beginning or continuing of a learning episode. The strongest motivation for learning occurs when adults successfully learn what they value and want to learn in an enjoyable manner (Wlodkowski, 1985).

Metamotivation is the label given to the motivation of the individual to learn to distinguish it from factors relating to reasons for participating in educational programs (Fellenz, 1993, p. 10). The three SKILLS metamotivation learning strategies are attention to the learning, reward/enjoy the learning, and confidence in learning. Definitions from Fellenz (1993, p. 10-11) are as follows: Attention to the learning is the focusing of an individual's learning abilities on material to be learned. Reward/enjoy the learning is the motivational factor of anticipating or recognizing the value to one's self of learning specific material. It also includes the fun of learning and the satisfaction with the outcome of the learning activity. Confidence in learning is reassurance of one's efficiency and support for feelings of confidence.

## Memory

Memory of past experiences are what adults rely on to determine present behavior. Wingfield and Byrnes (1981) described memory as "the capacity of humans to retain information, to recall it when needed and recognize its familiarity when they later see it or hear it again" (p. 4).

Memory processes are mental activities that store information in memory and the activities that later make use of that information. Processes involve encoding (acquisition), storage (retention), and retrieval (recall). The encoding process interprets a stimulus and stores a representation of that interpretation in memory (Seamon, 1980). The type and level of encoding depends on the task requirements. According to Paul and Fellenz (1993), the storage or retention process is necessary if a person is to use the information as the basis for the later act of remembering. Retention involves the act of storing encoded information. The retrieval process, according to Paul and Fellenz (1993, p. 14), consists of four aspects: recognition, the ability to recognize things that are known through previous learning, is the adult's major use of the memory system; recall, the unaided reproduction of previously learned material; recollection, the process of remembering a complex of events that occurred at the time of learning; and, reconstruction, the reproduction, not of the learned material itself, but of the order in which it was originally presented.

Memory structures, short-term or long-term, are concerned with the form and nature of information storage as a product of the memory processes.

Short-term memory holds information that is necessary for some immediate use. Long-term memory refers to the capacity to store information for activities that may occur at some unspecified time in the future. Two aspects of long-term memory are semantic, our working knowledge, and episodic, specific events that are recalled by remembering the context of the event. The theory on level of processing maintains that the deeper a stimulus is processed, the stronger, more durable and easily retrievable will be the memory (Seamon, 1980; Zechmeister & Nyberg, 1982).

The three SKILLS memory learning strategies are organization of memory strategies, external aids, and application of memory. Definitions of these three strategies follow. Organization of memory strategies refers to the manner in which the memory reorders or restructures information from that in which it was originally presented (Seamon, 1980). External aids is relying on the interaction of the mental processes of the individual and the manipulation of the environment to ensure recall, reported Paul and Fellenz (1993, p. 17). They further reported that application of memory involves using processes, structures, and strategies of long-term memory to enable individuals to access their vast knowledge system in order to plan, carry out, and evaluate learning (p. 18).

### Critical Thinking

Critical thinking has become a much talked about and investigated area during the past two decades not only for educators but also for others interested in

developing human potential. Sternberg, according to Fellenz (1993, p. 21), categorized critical thinking under three traditions of thought: philosophical, educational, and psychological. The philosophical focuses on logical systems versus the personal and physical constraints. In line with this tradition, Ennis (1987) described critical thinking as "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do" (p. 10). Paul (1990), also thinking philosophically, stated, "Critical thinking is disciplined, self-directed thinking which exemplifies the perfection of thinking appropriate to a particular mode of domain of thought" (p. 51). Educational definitions of critical thinking include Beyer's in Fellenz (1993, p. 21), who said that "critical thinking is a collection of discrete skills or operations each of which to some degree or other combines analysis and evaluation." Psychological approaches identify components involved in the process of critical thinking. Sternberg (1986) named three types of components: metacomponents, performance components, and knowledge-acquisition components.

Common ground regarding the definition of critical thinking seems to be deeper or higher level thinking related to creativity and innovation. Fellenz (1993) espouses that the final and vital goal of critical thinking is improvement of individual and societal learning (p. 22).

Brookfield (1987) divided critical thinking into four areas: identifying and challenging assumptions; challenging the importance of context; imagining and exploring alternatives; and reflective skepticism. The Brookfield (1987) four-step



model is used in SKILLS mainly because it emphasizes a process rather than a component approach and it is simpler to use. Brookfield also emphasized real-life situations which are the same intentions utilized in SKILLS.

The three SKILLS critical thinking strategies are evaluating the assumptions, generating alternatives, and conditional acceptance. Definitions of these three strategies follow. Assumptions, according to Brookfield (1987), can be challenged by critical thinkers if they "try to identify ideas, beliefs, values, and actions based on assumptions, and examine their accuracy and validity" (p. 90). In SKILLS challenging assumptions, according to Fellenz (1993),

invites respondents to examine the accuracy or the acceptance uncritically given to an assumption while others prompt them to identify relationships, spot inconsistencies, or question value sets.  
(p. 24)

Generating alternatives, according to Fellenz (1993), "encourage hypothesizing within the reality of the situation. Specific techniques used include brainstorming and attempts to envision the future" (p. 25). Conditional acceptance is the questioning of simplistic answers and the predicting of consequences (Fellenz, 1993, p. 25).

### Resource Management

The resource management area stems from an examination of three aspects of the use of resources by adult learners. These are the ability to identify appropriate sources of information; the critical use of these resources; and the use of human resources in learning activities.

Regarding the ability to identify appropriate sources, a study by Shadden and Raiford (1984) confirmed that adults are neither educated for change nor trained in the use of modern information sources. Shirk's (1983) study supports this information by confirming that adults use their own books, themselves, and friends more frequently than any other learning resource even though they evaluate these resources as only mediocre in effectiveness.

Tough (1971) and Smith (1982) both reported problems with adults seeking resources and using them in the reaching of learning goals. Tough (1971) said,

Certain persons would not or could not give the required help, and certain printed materials were useless. Even when beneficial help was received from certain resources, much of it cost the learner a great deal of time, money, effort, or frustration. (p. 105)

Smith (1982), expressing similar concern, said,

One problem that learners frequently report is finding more printed or audiovisual materials available on a topic than they know what to do with. Materials may also be overly technical or too detailed. (p. 103)

The third factor involves the concept of "set." Set, according to Fellenz (1993), is the tendency to maintain the patterns of thinking or behavior that have proven successful in the past (p. 26). Attempts to break traditional patterns and teach more effective methods of learning resource management should consider both the social and psychological environment of the adult learner (p. 27).

Learning strategies that lead to effective use of resources can have a very positive effect on the learning process. Strategies may relate to identifying and using appropriate resources or the manner in which the resource is used.

The three SKILLS resource management strategies are identifying resources, critical use of resources, and using human resources. Definitions of these three strategies follow. Identifying resources concerns not only the learner's awareness of appropriate resources but also the willingness to use these resources. Critical use of resources refers to the ability to make decisions in the selection of resource materials to use in a learning episode. Lastly, using human resources, according to Fellenz (1993), "include the impact of people and the social environment and involves listening to people with different opinions or insights into issues" (p. 27).

#### Summary

The important role volunteerism has in the United States has been established. Volunteers existed in this country before governments did and volunteers founded this nation. More than half of all Americans serve as volunteers.

The United States operates under three sectors-- government, business, and voluntary -- all of which depend upon one another. The need for a three sector system, all working together and complementing one another, is evident from the history of our nation. Government provides much needed grants and tax incentives to donors of the voluntary sector; business receives profits from the goods and services utilized by the voluntary sector as well as providing a labor pool of voluntary talent; the voluntary sector handles social welfare issues that big

government would be inefficient at or unable to politically accomplish; and the voluntary sector offers individuals the opportunity to contribute their resources to whatever cause they choose rather than letting government decide for them.

Total contributions by individuals, foundations, and corporations to charitable organizations in 1992 was \$124 billion (Great Falls Tribune, 1993). Managing the programs on which this money, as well as government grant dollars, is spent requires skilled leadership. Improper management not only fails the people and organizations that donate their resources but it also, and perhaps more importantly, fails the people for whom the volunteer service is targeted or intended. This review of volunteerism defined the dimensions of the organizations that face volunteer leaders.

Effective leadership is at the root of organizational survival. To be effective, organizations today require leaders that can communicate, network, and empower people. The most important resource in any organization is its people. Education plays an important role in achieving organizational success and self improvement. An effective leader provides direction and vision while focusing on people. These effective leadership methods and the review of volunteerism provided the backdrop against which to review decision styles and learning strategies.

An individual's decision style affects not only whether he or she is properly suited for the job he or she does, but also the probability of success in their decisions. Those individuals properly suited for the positions they hold are more

likely to succeed. Many individuals hold positions or work in occupations that do not suit their personal style. The review of decision styles narrowed the focus of this study to the individual level. Understanding that a volunteer leader's decision style depends on experiences, training, habits, and the environment in which the situation occurs led to a clearer review of learning strategies that depend on and are affected by similar issues.

Various learning strategies are used by leaders to enhance the probability of success for different learning scenarios. The choice of how one learns can come from experience, training, habits, or other areas. The effectiveness of learning strategies depends on the situation. Problems confronting executive level volunteer leaders are not always well defined, so relying on one's real-life experiences is not unusual.

In conclusion, people's histories and backgrounds determine how they react to problems. Matching the right people with the proper situations and providing learning opportunities based on individual preferences will enhance the probability of success in their decision making and learning retention. If decision style and learning strategies can both depend on the background and experiences of the individual, then how the individual learns during these experiences or situations provides a connection between one's decision style and learning strategy. The way an individual perceives and comprehends stimuli then influences the techniques used to learn for the given situation.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROCEDURES

#### General Design

This study utilized a Decision Style Inventory, a Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies, a demographics questionnaire, correlation statistics, and the multivariate statistical technique of discriminant analysis to investigate the relationship between the decision styles and learning strategies of the presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations. This study also investigated the relationship between both the decision styles and learning strategies of the presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations and specific data such as age, education, experience, and gender.

This study utilized a correlational research design. Gay (1987) described correlational research as "research that involves collecting data in order to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables" (p. 587). Correlational research describes an existing condition. The degree of relationship is expressed as a correlation coefficient. If a relationship exists between two variables, it means that scores within a certain

range on one measure are associated with scores within a certain range on another measure. Further describing the correlational method, Gay (1987) stated,

Correlational studies provide an estimate of just how related two variables are. If two variables are highly related, a correlation coefficient near + 1.00 (or -1.00) will be obtained; if two variables are not related, a coefficient near .00 will be obtained. The more highly related two variables are, the more accurate are predictions based on their relationship. (p. 264)

The basic correlational design requires scores for each member of the sample plus one score for each of the variables of interests. The paired scores are then correlated. The resulting correlation coefficient indicates the degree of relationship between the two variables.

In a correlational study designed to explore or test hypothesized relationships, a correlation coefficient is interpreted in terms of its statistical significance. Statistical significance refers to whether the obtained coefficient is really different from zero and reflects a true relationship, not a chance relationship; the decision concerning statistical significance is made at a given level of probability.

According to Gay (1987), "in a relationship study, the scores for each variable are in turn correlated with the scores for the complex variable of interest" (p. 271). There is one correlation coefficient for each variable; each coefficient represents the relationship between a particular variable and the complex variable under study. Discussing the computation of a correlation coefficient, Gay (1987) reported,

The most commonly used technique is the product moment correlation coefficient, usually referred to as the Pearson  $r$ , which is appropriate when both variables to be correlated are expressed as ratio data or interval data. Further, since the Pearson  $r$  results in the most reliable estimate of correlation, its use is preferred even when other methods may be applied. (p. 271)

### Population

The population for this study was the presidents or chairpersons of the nonprofit, volunteer organizations with an annual operating budget of \$25,000 or more that are located in the City of Great Falls or Cascade County, Montana. The participants were either current or past presidents or chairpersons of volunteer organizations that had served in this capacity anytime between 1 January 1974 and the present.

### Sample

A total of 70 volunteers were given the Decision Style Inventory (DSI), the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS), and the demographics questionnaire. Gay (1987, p. 137) reported that for correlational studies at least 30 subjects are needed to establish the existence or nonexistence of a relationship. The participants for this study were identified by contacting nonprofit organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, and citizens that were familiar with volunteer social service programs. Once a list of chairpersons or presidents of nonprofit organizations was started, the participants were asked to



identify previous leaders and a continuous sample list was generated by this networking technique.

When filling out the questionnaires, participants were also asked to identify additional nonprofit organizations that had annual operating budgets of at least \$25,000 and additional organizations that they had served as president or chairperson.

### Instruments

A one-page demographics questionnaire was prepared and utilized to generate demographic data about executive volunteer leaders included in this study (Appendix A). This questionnaire also sought information relevant to some of the research questions of the study. In addition, each volunteer leader was asked to complete two instruments: a Decision Style Inventory and a Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies. After the questionnaire and both inventories were completed, a comparison was made to determine each individual's learning strategy and decision making style.

### Demographics Questionnaire

The demographics questionnaire served multiple purposes for this study. First, it provided contact information about participants such as their name, address, and phone numbers so that the researcher could get back to them if required. Second, it provided necessary information about variables relative to

this study such as age, gender, volunteer leadership experience, and formal education. Third, it provided participants with two questions aimed at measuring training provided by volunteer organizations and an additional question utilized in this study. This question was: Why did you accept the position of chairperson/president? Fourth, it provided verification that the participant's position held within the volunteer organization and the organization's annual operating budget both met the criteria of this study. Lastly, it provided additional organizations and volunteer leaders to include in this study.

### Decision Style Inventory

The Decision Style Inventory (DSI) is an instrument that is used to classify people according to the four basic styles of directive, analytical, conceptual, and behavioral. It also reveals complex patterns of styles, showing dominant and backup styles.

The Decision Style Inventory was developed by Rowe in 1981, and it helps as one of a number of ways an executive can identify what is required to achieve success (Rowe & Mason, 1987, p. 5). To use the DSI the individual reads and answers 20 questions, ranking them according to which answer fits their personality and feels right or flashes into their mind first. The individual's answers should reflect what they prefer to do, not what they believe is correct or desirable (Rowe & Mason, 1987, pp. 38-39). See Table 2 for the typical range of decision style





































































































































































