Massively multiplayer online games as a sandbox for leadership: the relationship between in and out of game leadership behaviors

Sean Henry Veloria Mendoza

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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAMES
AS A SANDBOX FOR LEADERSHIP:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IN AND OUT OF GAME
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Learning Technology

By
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May 2014

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This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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DEDICATION

The games portion of this paper is dedicated to chess player, family man and my father, Salvador M. Mendoza (1942-2008). I miss you dad! You’ve passed the love of games and life to the next generation.

The leadership portion of this paper is dedicated to the memory of my Pepperdine C14 Brother James Kevin Murray (1962-2013), a leader in his community who helped transform the lives of so many. He may be gone but not forgotten.

With love, I offer this paper to God and my neighbor. It was created with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my mind.

Pacem Deus Vobiscum
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Of course I can’t thank my dissertation chair and committee members enough for their guidance
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ABSTRACT

Given society’s increasingly technology centric play and workplace environment, Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOs) can be an excellent sandbox to develop future leaders of teams, which are the lifeblood of any organization. MMOs like World of WarCraft provide rich immersive experiences that allow leaders and followers the ability to create highly complex ecosystems that can mimic some of the largest out of game organizations. In game they can potentially gain valuable insights, which can later be applied to the workplace. This study explores Leadership characteristics appearing in and out of game. A combination of identity theories and leadership characteristics provide a greater understanding of possible relationships that may be occurring between leaders and followers; and in and out of multiplayer video game environments. Using transformational leadership as a framework, 6 leaders were interviewed, and assessed with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Also, their guild communities were examined for evidence of leadership behaviors. The results found relationships between a leader’s in and out of game characteristics with values and contexts in the workplace between leader, community, and follower. These relationships create and shape the lived experiences of leaders providing them the insights to create connections between relevant contexts in game with their workplace environment. This study identifies leadership stories, that can been employed in the workplace for the benefit of the organization; and the use group play spaces as a place to practice leadership operations of a business. Through these narratives, leaders can better understand the values that shape their identity; the relevant contexts that enabled the appearance of leadership characteristics in and out of game; and an opportunity to connect with a community aligned to teach leaders how to be.
Chapter 1. Introduction

It’s hard to forget your first love; in my case it was football. As a young man from the islands who had just recently moved to the Pacific Northwest, a neighborhood friend first introduced me to this game. At first we threw the oddly shaped ball to each other in a game of catch. Then we found and played a football game with the local school kids. Before starting the game I received a crash course on the rules of the game from the neighborhood’s twelve-year-old, self anointed expert. “When I say hike, I want you to run as fast as you can along with the guys down the field and catch the ball when I throw it to you. They’ve got a ten Mississippi count so I’ll have plenty of time to get it to someone.” I said, “okay.” As I lined up with my teammates, I was asking myself, “What’s a Mississippi? Isn’t that a state?” Before I knew it, I was running down the field with the ball on its way to my outstretched hands. The very second the ball landed in my hands I was hit by a defender and momentarily stunned. Amazingly, I hung onto the ball and stayed on my feet. Impressed that I was able to break the tackle, I kept running. Strangely, I my buddy’s face had changed from excitement to horror as I approached what I believe to be the goal. Wondering what was happening, should I stop or keep going? Cutting through the cheering and yelling on the field, I could hear my friend scream, “You’re going the wrong way!!” So, I asked myself, “Which way would that be?” To my horror, I watched everyone point to a tree on the other end of the field. Although I was able to run the ball back to its original starting point, my buddy, who was never short of a backhanded compliment said, “Not a bad run. If you would have ran the right way, we would have gotten a touch down.” Although I had a bad start, I made two touchdowns that game, but we lost by one. This study takes me back to that first game and the lessons learned about myself through play and my ability to influence others.
I discovered two things during that first game, one’s effectiveness in any environment begins with knowing the rules and having a basic understanding of language and/or culture will help you fit in. As a newcomer to the game of football, I quickly discovered that in order to be effective in any game, you have to know the rules and artifacts that define the sport. If you’re new to the game and are willing to make some horrendous mistakes, its okay to just jump right in and say, hey, I’m a new guy. However, that doesn’t last very long when you’re making mistakes that spoil everyone’s enjoyment. Fortunately, my introduction to the game coincided with the beginning of football season, so I became an avid Monday night football enthusiast. Paying particular attention to the language of the game that included terminology and concepts like off sides, a touch back, and the heisman, the game of football has a rich culture filled with legends and traditions, on and off the field. Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) games, particularly World of Warcraft (WoW) also hold the same level of complexity and culture. With terms like Dragon Kill Points (DKP), Damage Over Time (DoTs), and Aggro, the gaming world is equally complex, when compared to the world of organized sports. During my first few weeks in World of Warcraft, I discovered that the rules and culture were not just limited to in-game situations, but out-of-game interactions. As reported by Williams, Kennedy, and Moore (2011), some guild members continued their online relationships into out-of-game friendships. The social relationships and etiquette formed both in an out-of-games can also govern the quality of play. The fear of being marked as a pariah by for violating rules or social norms are what keep members in line.

Looking back on my experience as a leader on the field, I realize now that everyone had a role in the success of the team and those experiences helped transform how I interact and influence others. Through my athletic abilities and determination, my role was to rally the team
when we were down on points. It wasn’t something I did all the time or was asked to do, but would take the reins of the team to inspire and motivate. By finding something that inspired and connected us to a positive outcome of the game, could rally my teammates. Without realizing it, I was enacting four leadership qualities that are the cornerstones of transformational leaders (Northouse, 2004). The first of these was *inspirational motivation*, a component of transformational leadership to influence my team. Moving through school and into adulthood, I acquired a number of other skills such as *intellectual stimulation* when I lead a computer hacking group; *individualized consideration* towards my employees’ needs for professional development and *idealized influence/charisma* as Hall President during my undergraduate years. Moving into the gaming world, I noticed my tendency to apply these qualities of transformational leaders to situations in game. Given my leadership experience in MMOs and at my place of employment, I pondered the relationship of leading people and small teams in either environment.

**Leadership Within a Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) Game**

As described by Ancona and Bresman (2007), today’s organizations understand that “leadership can no longer exist only at the top of the organization, but must also be distributed throughout the organization and shared with teams” (p. 4). Through the empowerment of smaller teams organizations can simultaneously nurture innovation while managing their bottom lines. This is why corporations look to sports models and coaching techniques for insight and training on leadership. As described by Tompso (2008) of the American Management Association, businesses are leveraging coaching techniques found in sports to gain an advantage achieving goals against their competitors. In order to accomplish their goals individuals must work together as a team, and learn to trust one another, taking on a leadership role if the
situation demands it. MMOs have the potential to provide a platform for the nurturing of leaders.

A highly complex computer program that utilizes the connectivity and technology of the Internet, MMOs games are developed primarily for entertainment, but have become complex social ecosystems centered in an immersive fantasy environment. Boasting over 10 million subscribers (Entertainment, 2008), World of Warcraft (WoW) provides a variety of in-game challenges for individuals or groups, called guilds. Participants are immersed in a media rich environment through their avatar, an online representation of themselves, where they can explore or interact with in-game characters, other players or communities to solve in-game challenges. Much like conventional sports, MMOs can provide an opportunity for participants to explore, practice, and actively participate in activities that test a range of abilities integral to leadership.

As a sandbox of leadership, World of Warcraft contains the necessary affordances that can provide compelling and immersive experiences in a safe environment. These affordances include the use of group dynamics to accomplish a goal, the application of power to influence team members and development of in-game leadership skills relevant to out-of-game situations. The ability to influence followers to adopt or implement a strategy towards a collective goal is one example that would benefit in- and out-of-game leaders. As described by Wolfenstein (2010), World of Warcraft is an excellent space for leadership, but “it takes investment on the part of leaders to ensure that they have the opportunity to exercise leadership playfully” (p. 369). MMO’s empower participants to play, explore, and practice the art of leadership within an in-game sandbox as one who leads or a valued team member.

**Problem Statement: MMOs as a Sandbox for Leadership**
In today’s increasingly technology centered workplace, the ability to inspire followers and nurture teams are some of the challenges facing today’s leaders. This study explores World of Warcraft, to understand better the potential use of MMOs as a sandbox for leadership. This study answers the question, “How do leadership behaviors in the workplace and in-game guilds compare with each other, if at all?” Insight obtained as a result of this study can greatly improve our understanding and the efficiency of small teams, which are the lifeblood of any organization. The following research questions are developed to explore MMOs as a plausible platform for the development of current and future leaders.

1. What is the lived leadership experience of leaders of groups/teams in a massively multiplayer online game?

2. What is the lived leadership experience of group/team leaders in an MMO game setting outside of game settings in their workplace?

3. What if anything is found in common in these two settings?

In an effort to answer these questions a mixed method was employed. Data was gathered from informant interviews, questionnaires, and guild websites to identify the appearance of in and out of game leadership characteristics. Greater detail will be provided in Chapter 3 Research Design, outlining the selection of informants, and methods used to gather and analyze the data.

**Significance of the Study**

In our global economy, today’s knowledge worker is continually learning, task oriented, autonomous, values innovation, wants to be seen as an asset rather than a cost and will work only for a company it chooses (Drucker, 1999). World of Warcraft has the ability to create a sandbox where knowledge workers can practice, experiment, and apply theories of leadership to benefiting their in- and out-of-game organizations. Today’s fast-paced and global organizations require small teams to work collaboratively utilizing the skills of each team member, bringing
value to the entire team. Leadership opportunities also found in MMOs such as raid leadership and complex collaborative problem solving called theorycrafting (Glas, 2010b), are focused on improved performance and increased efficiency of small teams, benefiting the entire organization.

**Limitations of the Study**

In a society fixated on one’s tallness, I liken the limitations identified in this section to an individual short in stature utilizing devices that compensate for lack of height. When a colleague was asked about her 4’5” frame she replied, “Sure. I’m short, but... but I’ve got lifts.” A statement made not to diminish the importance of her stature, she understood her physical limitations and through her knowledge of her environment employed and articulated a solution that negated the concerns of her peers. The following list endeavors to identify any limitations associated with the study and explain how these issues are either addressed or not have any relevance to the targeted data. For this study, the following limitations and accommodations are acknowledged to be:

1. The transference of transformational leadership identities and behaviors from in- to out-of-game are too complex to show causality. Fortunately, the purpose to this paper is not to identify specific variables, but to indentify if there is a relationship between in- and out-of-game behaviors of leaders.

2. Although all safeguards are in place to protect anonymity, the possibility exists of participants who may inflate or deflate their in- and out-of-game experiences. One cannot prevent the inflation or deflation of responses by participants. However, through the use of consistent questions, probing questions, and the cross triangulation of participant responses, the researcher may identify collective and
relevant themes that stand above individual responses. This concept of triangulation can be found in Chapter Three, Data Collection.

3. The researcher has bracket-preconceived notions of identity and leadership opinions, making the interpretation of data and analysis by the research a limitation. With a neutral third party, leadership rubric in Chapter 2 and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) testing specifically for transformational leadership, these techniques and tools were utilized to minimize error in the gathering, interpretation, verification, and triangulation of research data.

4. There’s no guarantee that the leaders identified in this study have all the transformational leadership traits as defined in this study. Based on a list of behaviors and attributes relevant to transformational leaders, the rubric in Chapter 2 will provide a combination of which four Transformational Leadership attributes each research participant leader may display.

5. Aside from the MLQ, there is no unifying test or rubric that compartmentally describes an individual’s leadership both in- and out-of-game as it pertains to Transformational, Transactional, and Nonleadership factors. Although broad, these factors can allow us to identify the perceived leadership of participant behaviors in- and out-of-game.

6. The MLQ tests the perception of leadership only from the leaders point of view. It is not too often a leader sees his leadership style accurately, especially through the eyes of one’s followers. Although this questionnaire will not include feedback from followers, the main focus of this study is to see if there is a relationship between the identity of leaders in-game verses out-of-game as part of a shared experience.
7. To date no available instrument has been created to assess the projective identity of transformational leaders that engage in an MMO. However, it stands to reason that the techniques utilized in the paper “Defining the Virtual Self” (McCreery, Krach, Schrader, & Boone, 2012, p. 981), with concepts of Transformational Leadership and information provided by the MLQ will provide adequate insight through the triangulation of emergent themes in this study.

8. Non-titular or non-positional leadership cannot be studied without a 360-degree survey from followers and supervisor(s). Given the exploration of a leader’s in- and out-of-game personal experiences and perceptions, such a survey would add data and complexity to leader-follower interactions extending the time and resources necessary to complete this study. This complex relationship is outside the scope of this study. Through our understanding of in- and out-of-game cognitive limitations that surround us, we are given greater insight to our own world and our place in it.

9. Given the open ended interview questions, this study recognizes the possibility or probability of informants forming relationships between their in and out of game leadership characteristics, either consciously or unconsciously. The researchers understands that this can not be avoided, but brings to light the importance of our experiences which may have a profound affect on our values, roles and perception of our selves within our community.
Chapter 2. An Online Sandbox for Leadership

Most people may think of a football field or corporate boardroom as a sandbox for leaders, not a MMO game like World of Warcraft. “World of Warcraft?!? Isn’t that a violent online game where a bunch of kids kill monsters with avatars? Like the game of football, World of Warcraft can provide a platform for more than just entertainment. Whether you’re captain of a local football team or a raid leader in World of Warcraft, games provide their players opportunities for leadership. With the knowledge of their environment and opponent, these leaders can inspire their followers to adapt and overcome adversity. Leaders in either environment build teams consisting of individuals that have some or all of the following skills; expertise, personality, motivation, and network for success (Ancona & Bresman, 2007). The leader, through a combination of group dynamics and leadership style, influences team members to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004). Anyone who has ever played or seen a sporting event knows that some of the greatest game leaders display a variety of characteristics that ultimately win the day; charisma that draws followers to a cause; inspiration that motivates individuals to act; insight to game or group strategies; and a nurturing environment that aligns the needs of the individual to the goals of the group. Online games like World of Warcraft allow us to test a wide variety of possibilities with team members that would be too expensive or too dangerous to attempt out-of-game. MMOs make an excellent sandbox for the development of leadership because of the compelling relationships developed by players as a result of in-game communications in immersive in-game environments and its potential as a third place. Ray Oldenburg (1989) describes a third place as a social gathering that scaffolds members as they develop within a community. Members are free to explore and formulate their own identity through social, playful, and meaningful interactions with individuals and groups. In game groups leverage online tools to communicate with members and external groups.
The in-game environment of an MMO provides powerful communication tools, such as in-game text chat with their leader and team members to interact and collaborate towards a common goal. Although voice communication is possible, in-game chat is widely utilized as the communication tool in World of Warcraft. This feature enables players to communicate with each other by typing a combination of text and/or commands into the chat field, which is typically displayed in the lower left hand portion of the screen. The list of the commands available provide players the ability to interact with as few or as many individuals as they like at any one time for a variety of purposes, ranging from social to the coordination of in-game activities. Participants can also subscribe to in-game text chat channels with a focus on improving their in-game performance, efficiency, and connecting with players with similar goals, as described in Chen’s (2012) study of teams in World of Warcraft. Although most players initially engage in-game chat channels to improve their in-game performance through dialog and feedback, interactions can be relaxed or filled with tension as relationships develop between individuals. Displayed below is an in-game chat exchange that characterizes a relationship between two players as described by Chen (2012):

19:00:02.468 : [2. healsting] Sven: I’m ranged for Will healing
19:00:10.515 : [2. healsting] Shaun: ....
19:00:17.578 : [2. healsting] Shaun: Sven, you are fired.
19:00:21.484 : [2. healsting] Sven: Hey, most people avoid you, Shaunny!
19:00:24.312 : [2. healsting] Sven: It’s the breath
19:00:32.218 : [2. healsting] Sven: I’m giving an alternative!
19:00:46.406 : [2. healsting] Shaun: an option that is closer to the caves.
19:00:49.015 : [2. healsting] Shaun: you...
In this situation, two players interact with one another much like they would in a real life scenario, in a push-pull relationship of authority. Although they may not like or even enjoy each other’s company, their participation is part of a tenuous alliance sustained by the promise of a future reward or benefit. Relationships, regardless of environment, are built on trust and respect and the result of an active dialog between two individuals. Although the vehicle in which the push-pull exchange is different, verbal vs. in-game text chat, the resulting outcome of the exchange is fundamentally the same; the formation or disintegration of a relationship. In-game chat can be a powerful tool for both leaders and followers as a means to forge relationships through social dialog. Since solo or individual play in an MMO has limited interactions between players, aspiring leaders typically seek out and participate in online experiences that create a sense of community.

As described by Steinkuehler and Williams et al. (2006), MMOs contain eight characteristics of a third place where future leaders can learn and actively engage in guild activities. As neutral ground, its members are free to move in and out of the game with the potential to experience various leadership styles and scenarios. Known for their dynamic and fluid environment, leaders of a group within an MMO can change quickly based on the needs and skills of its membership and known challenges (Wolfenstein, 2010). To overcome an in-game boss, a variety of leadership styles can be employed, ranging from distributive and transformational leadership. In a study that analyzed team interactions as they tackled their
challenge for the day, researchers discovered that players must learn to work collaboratively in an environment of trust, exhibiting distributive leadership behavior to reach their goals (Dijk & Broekens, 2010). With a display of in-game, talent, wit, diligence, and hard work a newcomer, *leveler and playful*, can quickly move through the ranks regardless of their out of game status (Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006). Testing and experimenting with in-game resources, members interact with peers and experts alike to increase their in-game performance, called *theorycrafting* (Chen, 2012). Immersed in socio-cultural activities supported by leaders, participants begin their journey as legitimate peripheral participants to becoming experts themselves (Lave & Wenger, 1991). With *conversation as the main activity*, participants share stories and videos of in-game strategies and tactics. With feedback and adjustment towards a common goal, a leader’s identity can take shape through a constant interplay of thoughts, symbols, and ideas from which they learn about themselves, their identity, and relationships (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007). Through constant dialog, participants create and realign their identity, which has been actively internalized and reinterpreted to accommodate new circumstances and activities. As new experiences are encountered, new identities are formed to act as a template of behavior for similar situations. Understanding how this transformation occurs between in- and out-of-game identities is an important part to understanding leadership in a highly social environment. Aside from the occasional software upgrade, MMOs are always *accessible and accommodating* to participants at any time of the day or night. With the help of technology and the ability to assign specific commands to keyboard or mouse inputs, players with out-of-game disabilities can participate and excel in MMOs (Poisso, 2012). With the support of their community all players can become a leader by participating and/or coordinating guild activities such as membership drives and raids. As active and engaged guild members are
seen to display an in-game attribute attract newcomers, they become *the regulars* of the guild, who portray the social norms and establish the standard code of conduct of leaders. As described by Steinkuehler and Williams (2006), the environment is not the measure of *low profile* required as a third space, but the social function of leaders. The systematic evaluation and categorization of social exchanges between leader and follower are “without pretension”. With this knowledge we can understand our environment, through the identification of social products, self-meanings, symbols, a point of reference, and a source of motivation for action (Valsiner & Van Der Veer, 1988). *A home away from home*, guild members see their in-game participation as a regular part of their life, which gives them a sense of *rootedness* in their guild and *feelings of being at ease* with the regulars that make up their community.

In-game resources and relationships formed within a guild create a “third place”. Used to connect with peers seeking to improve in-game performance, chat is used to develop and maintain relationships between players and their community. Through the formation of these relationships, leaders communicate and exchange social capital as a means to broaden their knowledge and build stronger personal connections (Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006). In-game raid collaboration or settling disputes amongst guild members, shape their identities as leaders and future interactions with peers and followers. As a part of their experience, sense of self, and social memberships are integrally connected to one another (Lave & Wenger, 1991), making third place an ideal environment in the formation of one’s identity. Through their active participation and reification of a community’s ideas, active members solidify their place and their identity (Wenger, 1998). With each contribution, members may move from the outside of
the community as a legitimate peripheral participant towards the center or may continue to stay on the edge of the community.

This chapter discusses the key concepts that shape an MMO as a potential sandbox for leadership: game infrastructure, the shaping of in-and out-of-game identities, and leadership behaviors of team members to accomplish goals. Game infrastructures create an excellent third place environment that empowers players to explore and nurture their leadership style. Leadership theories and models are employed to explain the complex and dynamic interaction between in-and out-of-game identities. A leadership rubric is used to identify and categorize style and behavior of leaders in the World of Warcraft.

**Massively Multiplayer Online Games**

MMO games are highly social interactive online environments that are highly immersive and media rich, role-playing strategy games. Sometimes referred to as a Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG), World of Warcraft (WoW) is one of the most compelling MMOs because of its ability to submerge players in a role or identity within a community. Compound the day-to-day activities of its players, as they go about their in-game lives against a back drop of with beautiful landscapes and fantastic creatures, WoW is one of the most visually appealing and exciting environments to explore leadership. The image below provides an example of a landscape that is both similar and foreign to out-of-game participants. Players may recognize the colorful trees and even hear the rushing water of the ornate fountain. However, we know that this in-game world is not like anything we have ever seen before and offers the promise of the unknown, where conventional out-of-game rules may not apply and the possibilities in this environment are limitless. MMO provides leaders with the freedom to play and experiment with their identity through the creation of a configurable avatar. Unless the
player provides information about his/her out-of-game identity, players have little or no knowledge of other players they encounter in World of Warcraft. This separation between in- and out-of-game space creates a safe environment for players to self-discovery.

An in-game representation of themselves, avatars create an artificial barrier of anonymity between the player’s real life identities with the third place activities in World of Warcraft. Players can act and portray themselves in any way acceptable to their out-of-game identity. To participate in an MMO, players navigate the in-game world with a representation of themselves called an avatar. In World of Warcraft, nearly every aspect of the avatar can be changed, such as race, facial configuration, and even sex.

With the nearly limitless variations to the avatar’s appearance, players do not know the real life appearance, age, and sex of other players they encounter in, World of Warcraft. For example, players have the freedom to follow or abandon behaviors in-game, which can be found off screen and learn from these experiences. In a study that explores sexuality and gender identity, Eklund (2011) found that players leveraged gender norms to receive help by portraying themselves as women in-game, but this help evaporated if their out-of-game identity is not that of a woman, through voice applications like Ventrilo or Skype. Given societal norms about leadership and performance, the anonymity inherent with MMOs level the playing field of opportunities. With past assumptions identifying men with greater opportunities for leadership, a survey of 820 South Korean online gamers discovered no statistical significance between men and women available to opportunities for leadership in WoW (Jang & Ryu, 2011). Players generally feel safe knowing that their real life identities are protected behind the anonymity of an avatar. It is this sense of safely and ability to be who and what one desires that makes MMOs the third place for leadership.
A third place for leadership in an MMO is in a guild. Varying in size and complexity, guilds have a common goal or purpose that is as dynamic as the makeup of its members at any given moment. Built on the social norms and values of the guild, acceptable levels of participation and performance in activities such as the defeat of an in-game boss (high level monster) can determine an invitation or exclusion to future events. Therefore players must nurture relationships that provide compelling leadership experiences. Knowing when to infuse humor into a situation is as important as providing direct commands in a high stress situation. Chen (2012) provides an example of this type of behavior, where a group of avatars exchange jokes while their group discusses strategies to overcoming the in-game boss, Ragnaros.

In a study that explores social interactions characteristic of MMOs, this type of communication brings players the social skills to exchange and generate dialog containing values and beliefs, contrary to their own (Ducheneaut & Moore, 2005). Players develop their identity through interactions in highly immersive environments that provide reflection and salience of values and goals inherent to the group or community. As described by Gee (2003), a projective identity acts as a bridge between a player’s active participation in an online environment, while pulling from out-of-game values. In this third place, leaders can test and develop responses with fellow members in a variety of situations to become effective communicators. Through these experiences, players can form identities that can shape their sense of self and society.

With the freedom of anonymity and the nurturing relationships, MMOs provide a third place from which to introduce, test concepts, and techniques of leadership. There are many parallels between in- and out-of-game leaders. Mentors provide important insights to success, training, and relevant situational experiences to generate active participation. With the guidance
of experts, participants are transformed into leaders prepared to leverage their skills and
to part of their newfound identity or role in the community. Although games have not yet become widely accepted by educational institutions to impart knowledge and practices, research by private and the public sector institutions have begun exploring relationships between in- and out-of-game leadership. As described by Blinka (2008), an MMO’s game design and architecture makes game play an immersive and reflective experience, allowing the player and avatar to create an emotional link between in- and out-of-games. A highly social, and complex environment containing groups and communities with established values, cultures, and social norms World of Warcraft is an excellent environment to nurture future leaders. Players actively participate and interact with each other to build teams, inspire followers, and explore techniques and practices to being a leader.

**Commitment, Identity Salience, and Behavior**

Acting within a social construct, individuals who are actively engaged in roles that display behaviors within appropriate social norms, strengthen their commitment to a group and salience to their identity (Stets & Burke, 2003). This behavior can come in the form of hours devoted or the fulfillment of multiple roles in support of team members. These interactions enable the participants to recognize each other and themselves in their respective roles within the context of a social structure. Through this recognition, behaviors become a part of the assumed roles that are internalized and integrated into the individual’s identity. In a study by Stryker and Serpe (1982) who examined the identity of religious individuals, they found a strong link between commitment, identity salience, and behavior. In their study, they found that respondents who were committed to their religious beliefs had more salient identities, which required them to spend more time as participants in religious activities. It is this same
commitment to the social contexts in an online environment, where our behavior within a game can shape our identity.

**Shaping Identity Through Play**

Our identity defines our actions and how we choose to interact in- or out-of-game. From our earliest childhood experiences, we discovered how to meet some of our most basic needs. As we grew into adulthood, we discovered that once our basic physiological needs are met, we begin to focus on what defines us as an individual and our place in our world (Maslow, 1970). It is through this learning process that identities are constructed to shape the individual and incorporated into a community. The same is true for our initial introduction into the world of MMOs. As members of a community, players must orient themselves to navigation controls, identify and accept social norms of onscreen behavior, and take an active role in guild participation. In an in-game environment where one’s attributes have limitless potential for change, players pull from their own personal preferences to create or reject the appearance of their avatar (Book, 2004). Even with an in-game character’s generic appearance, an avatar and its actions are an extension of the player’s identity. Although our avatars do not look like us, their actions represent a portion of our many identities created over a lifetime of experiences. One’s identity in a community can be conceptualized by answering how I see myself, how other see me and how it relates to the world (Shaffer, 2006). Continually active and influenced by a social environment, the working self-concept is a dynamic view of self-knowledge, influenced by the many roles held in a person’s life and social environments (Markus & Nurius, 1986). We are not simply the books we read in our childhood, but the result of a unique interaction of experiences through the roles held in groups and communities. Mead (1934) first described the relationship as the self reflecting society. Goffman (1959) later described our identity as a
working consensus that would be subject to change based on our setting. More contemporary researchers in this field have further refined the concept to “commitment shapes identity, salience shapes role choice behavior” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). The commitment and importance we give to the relationships within our communities and ourselves dictate our actions and shape our ever-changing identity. With the powerful influence of technology and the Internet, a review of existing identity theories to reflect our cognitive and social experiences is needed to understand behaviors of leaders in two very distinct worlds. This section of the paper provides a background of the theories, propositions, and evidence of what is known about in- and out-of-game identities. It also answers why we should expect any relationship between our in- and out-of-game identities as a result of our experiences.

Identity theories. To better understand identity in our increasingly connected digital world, I looked to two existing models rooted in Sociology and Psychology: Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory. Social Identity Theory is built on two main concepts, an individual’s social identity and self-categorization (Tajfel, 1959). As a psychological theory, Social Identity Theory is a construct that helps us understand the exchanges between the individual and society though socio-cognitive processes, with a focus on intergroup relations and behavior (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). The key to understanding Social Identity Theory is to look at identity through the eyes of a group or a community described at length in a later section titled, Social Identity Deindividuation Effect Model. Social Identity Theory sees one’s self perception as dynamic and always changing based on intergroup relations and immediate contextual factors. For example, World of Warcraft members who self-identity themselves by guild affiliation display behavior consistent to the social norms of their group. Furthermore, a variation of the individual’s perceptions may occur depending on their membership and
relationship with internal and external groups. Identity Theory’s main components consist of role identities, identity salience, and commitment (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity Theory is a sociological theory focused on the labeling of one’s identity into a variety of social categories, such as ethnicity, sex, race, and nationality, to understand the roles and behaviors that make up self-concept. Identity Theory is relatively static in view of an individual’s self-concept. Examples of this theory include gender identity and the perceived stereotypical role of males as disciplinarian or women as those who nurture. This concept is consistent with a recent study which found that active in game players had a greater number of roles or profiles from which to express themselves, control their emotions and engage with others (Kowert & Oldmeadow, 2013). The salience and commitment to a social category governs behavior and perception of one’s self. Based on this description provided by Stets and Burke (2000) one may summarize the differences between the two identity theories in the following way by (who one is) held by Social Identity Theory and (what one does) by Identity Theory.

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences Between Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Concepts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concept of self</strong></td>
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At their core, Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory share a common focus, which is to explain the reciprocal relationship between the self and society. Both theories describe
behavior into meaningful components, internalize identity to define one’s self concept, and utilize some form of categorization, self or social (Hogg, et al., 1995). By combining these two theories Stets and Burke (2000) believe we can gain a better understanding of a three (macro-, meso-, and micro) level social processes and “address agency and reflection, doing and being, behaviors and perceptions as central aspects of self” (p. 234). At the macro-level, a player’s interaction increases as the individual identifies with the chosen guild, is committed to the role identities played and sees the guild as an important vehicle to the definition of oneself. At the intermediate or meso-level, role identities and how they relate to inter and intragroup relationships may increase or decrease depending on the player’s role (Guild Leader or new member) and guild power/status (i.e. role of guild member of a powerful guild versus the role of guild leader of smaller less known guild). At the micro-level we are provided an insight to a player’s motivational processes through feedback that verifies a players role identity within a guild. For example, to feel confident as a good guild leader, he/she must receive verification of one’s identity from other guild leaders or followers of being a guild leader. With these similarities, the ability to explore individual roles and use of socio cognitive processes, and its application in online environments, specifically MMOs, a model must be identified or created to explain this relationship between the self and society.

**Virtual, real, and projective identities.** As described by Gee (2003), the tripartite play of identities provides the model to explain the interaction and development of identities in- and out-of-game environments. During gameplay there are three identities at play, virtual (in-game), real world (out-of-game), and projected. To illustrate these identities and how they interact with one another, the examples provided come from the identities formed during my participation in World of Warcraft. The *in-game identity* is taken by the player in the form of
an avatar that interacts with other players and the in-game environment. Initially configurable at the beginning of the game, players can select physical attributes as well as race, class, faction, and even gender for their avatar. In World of Warcraft, my in-game character’s name is RoninRed, Blood Elf (race), Paladin (class), Horde (Faction), and male (gender). The *out-of-game identity* is Sean Mendoza, who is playing and manipulating the actions and behaviors of the World of Warcraft avatar. With this identity come my critique, satire, education, and commentary and my self-categorization as Pepperdine University Doctoral Candidate, Researcher, Academic Technologist, Professor, Musician, Gamer, Entrepreneur, Marrow Donor, and Mango Plantation Owner. As described by Gee (2003), the *projective identity* is imbued with values and desires by the real (out-of-game) world and a projection or shadow of an identity constructed by a player’s engagement in activities and complex relationships towards an imagined future self.

![Diagram](image.png)

*Figure 1. Projective identity is one’s real world (out-of-game) person AS virtual (in-game) character*

It is through this imagined future self both in- and out-of-game identities are connected and always changing through the player’s interactions both in- and out-of-game. Unlike
experiences we find in movies or novels, the player is actively participating and reflecting in a
dynamic environment with an active community, culture, and lore. Through this deep and
critical learning, the projective identity brings about change, forming a new identity (Gee,
2003). It is with this profound connection that we expect this relationship between in- and out-
of-game identities.

Identity is formed through commitment, salience, and the tripartite play of identities. In
recent years, there has been evidence and studies that have supported this relationship between
in- and out-of-game identities. In her book *Life on the Screen*, Turkle (1995) described how in-
game world experiences reshaped an out-of-game perception to improve the quality of a
player’s life. In one instance a woman named Ava felt “incomplete” after she suffered the lost
of a limb. Because of this disability, she was unable to engage in an out-of-game relationship.
However, after engaging in an in-game relationship with another individual who’s avatar had a
similar disability and experiencing in-game love, she “re-imagined herself not as whole, but as
whole-in her incompleteness” (Turkle, 1995, p. 263). In an online article by Blinka (2008)
titled, *The Relationship of Players to Their Avatars in MMORPGs: Differences between
Adolescents, Emerging Adults and Adults*, players utilized their avatar to “project his or her
psychological contents (or dissociate them) without accepting a commitment on their behalf,
which leaves room for experimenting” (p. 1). In both examples players and participants became
immersed into an alternate reality, experimenting, and testing the bounds of their projective
identity. Through their active participation and reflection, they transcended the identity of their
avatar, reaping the rewards or penalty for their action. It is through our deep learning of our
environment, requiring active participation and reflection that we expect a relationship between
in- and out-of-game environments.
As we project ourselves into any given situation, we learn, define, and reinvent our identity. Participation in online environments requires the dynamic and fluid exchange of three identities: virtual, real, and projective. In- and out-of-game identities are the active participants in each environment. As the bridge that links in- with out-of-game, the projective identity has the ability to transcend the limits of each environment and enable the player to learn more about himself by projecting one’s out-of-game values, hopes, and goals into a safe haven for experimentation. “Virtual spaces may provide the safety for us to expose what we are missing so that we can begin to accept ourselves as we are” (Turkle, 1995, p. 263). Utilizing our projective identities, we have a bridge between the in- and out-of-games allowing for behaviors and attitudes to transcend and affect change in either environment. A player’s projection of themselves into their avatar is based on the salience and commitment they feel to the game and the communities in which they are an active member. The next section further explores this relationship of identity within the context of groups and communities.

**Relationship between identity and community.** In either environment, players connect and interact with others to better understand the environment. Although this is certainly true out-of-game, participation is an important part of an MMO. Play is participating (Glas, 2010a). Active participation in out-of-game environments with rules and responsibilities are both physical and social. There is nothing that prevents players from breaking any of the established social rules or group norms in either environment. However, doing so could have dire consequences for either identity, a form of death. For example if one decides in either (real or virtual) environment to associate with individuals that could get one killed (physical death or permanent expulsion from the MMO) the result would be the same, exclusion from participation.
This section endeavors to explain our expectation of behavior between in- and out-of-game environments, the dynamic relationship between a player’s community, environment and the role of the projected identity in online environments. To understand the complexity, the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE) is tied to the Social Identity theory, which explains how group norms can affect behavior. Although a number of different models were considered, two studies where identified that utilize the SIDE model to explain specific behavior aspects of in- and out-of-game identities, computer mediated communication and avatar dynamics.

**Social identity/deindividuation effect (SIDE) model.** This Social Identity Deindividuation Effect (SIDE) model has two assumptions, “a unique personal self is the basis of all rational action and that the group serves to impede the operation of such selfhood” (Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995, p. 175). The following graphic illustrates this complex SIDE model.

![Figure 2. Social identity deindividuation effect (SIDE) model](image)

The key concept in this model is *social identification*, which is the notion of self. This self is
made of two complex subgroups, the self (Individual) and social (Group) identity. The individual identity contains all of one’s values and beliefs acquired through a lifetime. The group identity holds the meanings and values held by the group. To become a member, an individual must conform to the values and social norms of the group. Through commitment and salience to the group, a participant’s group identity may become central and suppress the individual’s values and beliefs, even if it were contrary to that of the group. Deviations from social norms established by the group are punished by exclusion from artifacts or symbols integral to the groups (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006). This form of exclusion is how conformity is enforced. In a constant push and pull of individual/group identities, the notion of self (social identification) can fluctuate based on one’s interaction with or isolation from an influential group. The SIDE model provides three insights to in- and out-of-game identities. They are: physical and social psychological isolation are not equal, behavior in groups/crowds are social in nature, and self-presentation in a social context requires an analysis of the salient self, associated standards, and implications of the presentation (Reicher, et al., 1995). In the following studies, the SIDE model provides examples where active participation in an in-game group setting can form new behaviors.

In a study of computer-mediated communication, Reicher et al., (1995) felt that the anonymity and immersion of text-based communication lead to more extreme arguments (i.e. flaming). To test this argument, they first created an environment, which ensured anonymity in the group, which should result in more polarization. Secondly, the environment would identify if this negative behavior were the result of enhanced conformity to group norms as opposed to de-regulated and anti-normative behavior. The results of the test were consistent with what was expected and showed that isolation reinforced the salience of the group’s identity and enhanced
group conformity under appropriate conditions. The model provided an example that showed how it could be applied with technology and explains how identity can be affected by group behavior through immersion in a group, lack of personalizing cues, identifiably to in-group and the lack of identifiably to the out-group.

In a two part qualitative and quantitative study of WoW role players, Williams et al. (2011) examined identity formation and commitment to in-game relationships. Although there were two components to this study, the second component is relevant to this paper’s focus on social identification as it pertains to the SIDE model. It explored the culture and context of role-playing as an ethnographic study. The key question asked of the participants is “Why role play?” The results consisted of immersion, as a means of escapism, relaxation, and formation of relationships. Through their immersion, players created elaborate histories and were careful to create attributes to their avatar that matched their personal preferences. Their commitment to their avatar increased their salience to the game and fellow players. As the players projected their identities into their avatars, it became a means to disconnect from the day-to-day, out-of-game life and explore an environment with few boundaries. Through a projective identity and help of an avatar, players can explore their flirtatious identity and become so comfortable with their online persona, they may take on the behavioral characteristics of their avatar, out-of-game. Through projective identity, these players formed new identities and behaviors from their in-game experiences (Gee, 2003).

It is clear that one’s group association is a very powerful motivator to the formation of one’s identity and behavior. When taking the SIDE model into account, this type of behavior suggests an effort by the guild member to extend relationships out-of-game, ending some level of isolation. Identities and behaviors change because the in-game experiences for encountered
by the players create greater salience in their role and commitment to their community.

**Leadership**

Leadership is very complex discipline and only until recently have studies begun to emerge exploring the possibilities of MMOs as environments for future leaders and their teams. With the growing complexity of the global market, it would be impossible for a leader to be an expert in every field. Leaders of the next century will require a set of skills that will demand speed, encourage risk taking, include temporary leadership and create elements utilizing nonmonetary incentives and hyper transparency of information (Reeves, Malone, & O’Driscoll, 2008). With information and data moving at break neck speeds, leaders must have the ability to make very quick decisions, sometimes with incomplete information. With such uncertainty, leaders must be encouraged to take acceptable risks. With a focus to meet the mission at hand, the role of leader may be temporary based on the experience, skills, and abilities of individual team members. Lastly a leader must have the ability to motivate his followers through nonmonetary incentives and/or the hypertransparency of information. Non-monetary incentives can take the form of a tracking system (for wins and losses) that awards points and once an employee obtains enough points, they would receive a reward for their efforts. Hypertransparency of information provides real time information including status and mission updates. The information is shared not just to leaders but also to all members participating in a specific project. The shared information, sometimes in the form of a dashboard, makes visible the actions of the group and/or individual in real time. In doing so, participants may take action at their own initiative and temporarily take the reins of leadership to accomplish a specific objective. This is distributed leadership.

Multiple leaders working collaboratively, switching roles with each other and delegating
to followers are key behaviors of distributed leadership. Found in successful in-game teams, the distribution of leadership to complete a task or objective out performs any other leadership style (Dijk & Broekens, 2010). These distributed teams are characterized by having a high degree of communication, reflection, and negotiation. Distributed leadership does not identify a specific leader of the group, but a group of leaders working together towards a common goal. This shared responsibility makes every member a potential leader, ready to step up with the appropriate skills and experience ensure success (Hallinger, 2003). Centered on the group or community and not the individual leader, distributed leadership and transformational leadership share this commonality. In or out-of-game leaders display a variety of styles including transformational leadership, transactional or nonleadership style. In an effort to better understand leadership and the styles that may be present both in- and out-of-game, the following rubric that can be applied to leaders.

**Leadership rubric.** The leadership rubric in this section includes leadership styles that are associated with transformational leaders (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), transactional leadership, and nonleadership. Unlike transformational, transactional leadership does not consider the needs and personal development of the follower. These leaders exchange things of value to advance their “personal agenda without concern for the welfare of others” (Kuhnert, 1994, p. 13). Transactional leadership comes in two forms, contingent reward and management-by-exception. Contingent reward occurs when the leader and follower exchange rewards that are mutually beneficial for each other. For example, when a supervisor agrees to promote an employee, if he is to complete a very large project beneficial to the institution. The second form of transactional leadership is called management-by-exception, which refers to corrective criticism, negative
feedback, and negative reinforcement. Management-by-exception comes in two forms, active and passive. The active form is characterized by a leader who closely monitors followers looking for any violation and once identified quickly takes corrective action. In contrast, the passive form takes corrective action when standards have not been met or when a problem is brought to the attention of the leader. Although leaders who utilize this transactional form of leadership produce outcomes, the results, and performance of followers do not exceed or move beyond initial expectations (Northouse, 2004). The last form associated with transformational leadership is nonleadership. Nonleadership is the lack or absence of leadership. Also known as a laissez-faire style (hands off) of leadership, the leader makes no effort to satisfy the needs of followers, takes no responsibility, and provides no feedback.

The rubric displayed below reflects the three styles of leadership and their relation to one another. As described by Bass (1985), these three styles provide a continuum that describes a leaders relationship to that of their followers.

![Leadership Rubric](Image)

*Figure 3. Leadership rubric of styles and relationship to followers*
The first style described is transformational leadership, which consists of four factors idealized
influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.
These four factors describe a leader who supports, inspires, and actively participates in the well
being of his followers. The pinnacle of the leadership continuum, the use of transformational
leadership provides an opportunity for followers to perform beyond the expectations set by the
leader. The next style transactional leadership identifies two factors, contingent reward, and
management-by-exception. These two factors describe a transactional leader who is engaged
with followers by providing corrective feedback, which can be negative and exchanging items
of value as a means to influence followers towards a specific goal. Although followers reach
expected outcomes, they seldom exceed expectations. The third and final style is one labeled
nonleadership, which can also be described as laissez-faire. Laissez-faire leaders do not engage
with followers and are slow to making any decision. Followers of this final style are given little
or any feedback, development, and guidance. This portrayal of a leadership continuum provides
the rubric to identify leaders into three styles, both in and out of an MMO. Given the benefits
transformational leadership offers to followers, it is important to look at the specifics of this
leadership style.

**Transformational leadership.** Using transformational leadership, this next section will
apply the theoretical transference of a leader’s identity using projective identity from in- and
out-of-game environments within an MMO (i.e. World of Warcraft). In doing so, the results
can create information intensive business environments that nurture efficient and effective
leadership (Reeves & Malone, 2007). As part of transformational leadership, a leader’s identity
has four roles: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation,
individualized consideration (Northouse, 2004). Each of the four roles characterizes these
leaders in the following way and will be discussed at length later in the chapter. Also known as Charismatic Leadership, idealize influence describes the leader as a role model for his followers that displays high ethical and moral standards. Through their infectious enthusiasm, they motivate and collaborate with followers towards a shared vision of the future. Often acting as a mentor or coach, these leaders are respectful and look to the development of their followers.

One cannot underestimate the influence of peer-based networks and it’s effects on identity, resulting from game based, collaborative experiences manifesting themselves out-of-game (Ito, et al., 2008). As players begin to project more of themselves in-game, as active participants gaining leadership experiences that benefit the community, they in turn become transformed. It is through this connectedness that a sense of being (convergence) between two distinct social, identities and worlds occur (Jenkins, 2006). As the bridge between two worlds, the projective identity is also scaffolded by the supportive behaviors found in- and out-of-game environments. Enabling the potential of a leadership in one world to be a leader in another world.

The existing literature is presented to explain how people can practice, acquire or experiment with leadership behaviors in-game and apply them in out-of-game environments. The benefit this research would provide would be in the development of situated experiences for leaders in small teams that would otherwise be cost prohibitive or too dangerous to perform out-of-game. This research has the potential of developing immersive leadership experiences capable of making fast, calculated, data driven solutions, while creating an environment that is supportive, flexible, and hyper transparent information for employees. Combining identity theories from sociology and psychology, this paper is a review of existing literature on the use of MMOs as a possible sandbox specifically for transformational leaders. Within this sandbox,
trainers can create in-game leadership opportunities that would impart a concept and practice vital for success out-of-game.

**Opportunities for leadership in an MMO.** In the world of MMOs, the in-game equivalent of an organization that would provide leadership opportunities is a Guild. Players making up a guild have a very distinct play style, preference and protocol for everything (Glas, 2010a). Although members of guilds typically work together to achieve a common goal, they sometimes combine forces with other guilds to overcome an in-game challenge. With the increase number of participants and complexity of guild activities, the formation and maintenance of guild membership can be both mentally exhausting and time consuming for its leaders (Aldrich, 2009; Chen, 2012). Through a complex maze of social interactions, guild leaders also known as officers perform a variety of duties ranging from recruiting new members to providing activities to its members and partners in accordance to the guild’s in-game mission and vision of game play. Exercising skills and characteristics performed in game, leaders can also apply the same transformational techniques with some degree of success out-of-game (Xanthopoulou & Papagiannidis, 2010). Through an understanding of leadership opportunities and knowledge of the limitless possibilities of an MMO, we can identify what motivates us as individuals and how we influence others to accomplish a common goal, which is the essence of leadership (Northouse, 2004).

The leadership opportunities within an MMO come through an association within a guild (Jang & Ryu, 2011). As a member of a guild, leadership opportunities typically come in two roles, guild or raid leader. Guild leaders have responsibilities for the success and failure of the overall guild and its membership, while raid leaders for successful activities that draw members to the guild (Jang & Ryu, 2011). Performing a wide range of duties, guild leaders
promote members to positions of authority and are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the group. At times they may be called upon to settle disputes among members and establish processes and policies that conform to the vision of the guild. Having an expanded view, guild leaders also work with its membership to establish standards of game play, etiquette, and the promotion of members to officers (Andrews, 2010). Raid leaders on the other hand are focused on group activities called raiding done in raid groups or parties. Groups consist of five, ten, or twenty-five players, and raid leader invites members to participate in an in-game challenge (ie, clearing a dungeon or defeating a boss). With in-game rewards at stake, raid leaders, and officers develop complex performance systems to equitably distribute the spoils of a challenge. Ranging from Dragon Kill Points (DKP) to the laid back or random method, raid leaders bestow bonuses or non-monetary incentives to reward in-game performance (Chen, 2012). Dragon Kill Points (DKP) are awarded to members by raid leaders as a form of a reward and can be redeemed for loot or in-game gear (Malone, 2009). The laid back or random method is the absence of any systematic process to distribute items. Much like a manager in any corporation, raid leaders review individual and group performance, and reward or provide constructive (and sometimes not so constructive) feedback (Deluthor, 2007).

Given the many opportunities in MMOs, it is important to review the role characteristics of Transformational Leaders within the context and expected outcomes in both in- and out-of-game environments.
Table 2.

**Opportunities for Transformational Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-game (MMO)</th>
<th>Role Characteristics</th>
<th>Out-of-game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders develop relationships with members to build on relational social capital which can be used to influence followers (Goh &amp; Wasko, 2009)</td>
<td><strong>Idealized Influence or Charisma (Role Model)</strong> – Strong role model with high standards of moral and ethical conduct</td>
<td>An influential figure, like Nelson Mandela whose charisma and influence changed the moral standards and vision of a Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guild leader develops a YouTube video to inspire followers towards a shared vision (Lisk, Kaplancali, &amp; Riggio, 2012).</td>
<td><strong>Inspirational Motivation (Orator)</strong> – Communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring to motivate</td>
<td>A pep talk by a manager to motivate staff to excel in their duties, benefiting the company’s profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on an understanding of strategies and game mechanics, guild members utilize theorycrafting to create tools and resources to improve performance (Chen, 2012)</td>
<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation (Innovator)</strong> – With a focus on creativity and innovation, create transparency of processes, and persuade members to actively participate through constructive and insightful collaboration</td>
<td>Manager who promotes employee’s individual efforts to find new and innovative ways to streamline processes or resolve issues in production (ReVelle, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders and peers engage in a debriefing process to learn from mistakes and take corrective action to achieve shared goals (Reeves et al., 2008).</td>
<td><strong>Individualized Consideration (Coach)</strong> – provide a supportive environment and listen to the needs of followers</td>
<td>Leaders who provide professional development opportunities for their employee or treating employees in a caring and supportive way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To illustrate this concept, displayed is a chart that describes and links the four role characteristics of Transformational Leaders as described by Northouse (2004), with research pertaining to leaders in- and out-of-game.

**Idealized influence.** Research relevant to idealized influence or charisma, the Goh and Wasko (2009) paper titled, *Leadership in MMOGS: Emergent and Transformational Leadership* brings to light three predictors, five factors, and one key ability integral to a transformational leader’s success. The three predictors are participation, centrality, and
tenure. Predictably, success in any environment requires active participation in one’s community. As a participant, leaders engage in a significant number of guild activities with fellow members. Thru their activities and contributions, players are seen as experts, with the knowledge, skills and social connections to accomplish a objective or goal. Skills and abilities are only one component of success. The player must also have the social capital to create collaborative teams that have the ability to solve a variety of challenges. The second predictor is centrality. In a community of practice, centrality identifies the leader as an expert and catalyst to the formation and development of processes and knowledge for group. The third is tenure, which is indicative of a member’s years of service within a guild. All three predictors are scaffold by five factors also found out-of-game: trust, skill, respect, personality, and performance (Goh & Wasko, 2009). Lastly, leaders In-game leverage their relational social capital to influence followers towards a common goal or vision. Factors and predictors identified earlier can be found in- and out-of-game environments. Influence over followers as role models, regardless of environment is based on the moral and ethical standards of the leader.

**Inspirational motivation.** The ability to inspire others into action (or Inspirational Motivation) is another characteristic found in both in- and out-of-game leaders. As described by Lisk et al. (2012), a group of guild leaders developed and released a YouTube video to relay their vision and a sense of culture to their followers. With bees as actors and set to the music of *Let it Be* (by the Beatles), the video repeated common themes in the music lyrics useful in-game play. With words like, *always follow orders* and *X for POS destruction*, followers are reminded of their in-game duties and provided a mantra for play that’s delivered in a light hearted and informative way (Talamasca, 2008). The out-of-game equivalent would be a pep talk by a Orator/Manager to his followers/employees. During the talk, the manager might also provide a
video as an additional source of motivation, but ultimately relay the importance for ALL employees to excel (highlighting performance) and the potential benefits to the organization as a result of their efforts. In- and out-of-game events performed by have the common theme of improved performance that delivers a message that is typically motivational, informative, and inspirational to followers.

**Intellectual stimulation.** Creativity and innovation are the keys to the intellectual stimulation of a Transformational leader’s followers. As part of the hyper transparency of information and availability of resources in an MMO, players can and often exploit game mechanics in an openly collaborative environment to create an in-game advantage. This process of discussion, debate, and co-construction of models relevant to game mechanics is called theorycrafting (Chen, 2012). Leaders who nurture theorycrafting amongst followers encourage the use of innovation and creativity when faced with overcoming challenges, while sharing their findings with their community. Out-of-game leaders who encourage this process work collaboratively with followers to the Six Sigma approach identify creative and innovative way to streamline existing business and/or operational processes to benefit the organization (ReVelle, 2004). With greater operational efficiency and improved performance, the employee and organization benefit from the intellectual stimulation of theorycrafting.

**Individualized consideration.** Reeves et al. (2008) describe how leaders utilize nonmonetary incentives and the hyper transparency of information to create a supportive environment employed by transformational leaders with a focus on improving follower performance. Nonmonetary incentives such as Dragon Kill Points (DKP), serves as positive reinforcement of performance or as a public acknowledgement of achievement as a result of the award. Hypertransparent is information that is available in- and out-of-game; serves as a
resource for leaders and players to identify capabilities; and improves performance. With this data, leaders can act as coaches, providing supportive learning opportunities for underperforming players. Out-of-game managers gather information and provide incentives as a means to create a supportive work environment indicative of individualized consideration. Research identified in this section shows compelling evidence of MMOs as an excellent environment to nurture the effectiveness of transformational leaders, through the assessment of role identities, connectedness, and community. With projective identity bridging the gap between two worlds, leaders experience a sense of connectedness between in- and out-of-game worlds. As we have seen from the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects theory, group norm have powerful effect on the behavior of the player and their relationship to the guild. Through the limitless environment of MMOs, leaders have created incentives that encourage hyper transparency and nonmonetary incentives to improve member performance (Reeves et al., 2008). As more research demonstrating the positive effects of in-game experiences to improve performance come to light, more organizations may be encouraged to utilize this resource. When it comes to the dynamic nature of leadership, time and effort is needed to nurture and scaffold a community of leaders. As a new member of a guild, the opportunity of leadership occurs when one takes an active participation in a group, contributions to the community establishes himself as a leader and mentor (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Identity, connectedness, and community within a limitless MMO are what make it an excellent incubator for leaders.

**Purpose**

With society’s continuing dependency to the Internet, social networking environments, and the need for businesses to grow leaders effective in small teams the use of MMOs as a
sandbox for leadership comes at a perfect time in our history. Whether at work or at play, our identity and the communities that define us can be found on the Internet or accessible through our mobile devices. Through the use of our projective identities, we have a bridge that connects our in- and out-of-game environment. By exploring and understanding the identity formation of in-game leaders in an MMO and their relationship to their communities, we may better understand the concept of leadership. Utilizing the concepts of transformational leadership, this paper provides insight on complex social phenomena pertaining to a leader’s identity and the transference of knowledge and skills inherent to the roles obtained over a lifetime of experiences (Thomas & Brown, 2007). Building on the work of Jang and Ryu (2011), which showed a positive correlation between game leadership and the three factors of “value and motivation-oriented…trust and respect-oriented…[and]…intellectual stimulation-oriented” (p. 619), this paper explores Transformational Leadership and the role of projective identity, providing insight on the transference of skills between in- and out-of-game environments. With such an insight, it would be possible to answer the following question, “What is the relationship between in- and out-of-game behaviors in an MMO, specifically in the realm of transformational leadership?” In a world where students and teachers need to be assessed (Education, 2011) and companies are encouraged to test prospective employees for management skills (Taylor, 2011), this model will not evaluate expertise in leadership. It shows how MMOs can act as a sandbox to nurture future leaders through situative experiences that can later apply out-of-game (Xanthopoulou & Papagiannidis, 2010).

**Correlation Between In-And-Out-Of-Game Leadership**

The study leadership and its interaction between in- and out-of-game environments is a significant undertaking consisting of complex relationships. Given the developmental
complexity of cognitive process inherent to leadership, it is important to explore and assess the relationship between role identities and in-game environments that provide immersive leadership experiences. Although studies have shown a correlation between MMOs, transformational leadership and transference of skills between worlds (Jang & Ryu, 2011; Xanthopoulou & Papagiannidis, 2010), there are still a number of technology, and non-technology variables, such as projective identity that may provide insight in the successful transference of skills between in- and out-of-game environment. At this time the complexity and number of variables associated with leadership are too numerous to show definitive causality towards a specific leadership outcome between two worlds. Through this study of in- and out-of-game leadership identities, we can better understand the nature of Massively Multiplayer Online game environments and the bridge that connects these two worlds, projective identity. With the gathering of qualitative data, this paper employed a phenomenological study to ascertain an association between in out-of-game behaviors of leaders in an MMO. Once understood, we may better create situative experiences that could act as leadership sandboxes providing new leaders with experiences, skills, and contexts that could benefit themselves and their organization.

This chapter introduced a number of concepts and theories that create a foundation to explain the complex relationship of leadership role identity development online environments. The first portion of this chapter was devoted to understanding the theories behind in- and out-of-game identities. Within this section was introduced the concept of projective identity which is the bridge between the two worlds and the foundation of this paper. In support of projective identity the next section introduced the Social Identity Deindividuation Effect (SIDE) model and two technology-based studies that showed the powerful effects of group dynamics on
identity. With a focus on the game experience and leadership in MMOs, the next section provided an overview of today’s games, their immersive qualities and their use of technology, specifically the Internet. With its enormous user base, willingness to listen and implement suggestions from user feedback, the MMO, World of Warcraft is emerging as a developmental sandbox for future transformational leaders (Xanthopoulou & Papagiannidis, 2010). Although designed specifically for entertainment, we see opportunities for In-game leadership, especially for Transformational Leaders. This study explores the relationship between in- and out-of-game behaviors of transformational leaders in an MMO.

Summary

Connected closely to games, our identities are formed from our first experiences with play. Coupled with one’s physical/mental attributes and resources for practice, one can play games for a living. Just ask any professional athlete whom we lavish our attention and our pocketbooks upon. Those experiences define and shape our identities and when a stranger asks who we are, we will look back into ourselves and respond in with an identity that conforms or stands against social norms. “Hello, I’m Sean and I’m football player.” The same goes for in-game play, “Hello, I’m RoninRed and I’m a TerrorNova-n”. There’s a connection to a community and a projective identity that bridges the distance between in- and out-of-game environments. Even when we are disconnected from our group or community, the salience of our experiences to the identities formed, only strengthens our commitment to that identity. Either guiding a football team against an archrival or WoW’s DeathWing, players can create lasting identity shaping experiences forged by leadership.

Of all the environments created by our imagination, MMOs may be the future to how we experience a complex discipline or craft like leadership. MMOs are well suited for the
exploration, development, and practice of transformational leadership. They are changeable and provide leaders ample opportunities to display the behaviors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These opportunities, although learned in-game, does spillover if the experience is both situative and relevant to an out-of-game challenge (Xanthopoulou & Papagiannidis, 2010). Even if the leader does not conform to the transformational behaviors described earlier in this chapter, MMOs can act as a sandbox to explore alternative leadership concepts that create a bridge from where they are to where they would like to be in their development. Given the exploratory nature of this paper and immense complexity of variables in the field of leadership, it’s by no means the intention of the researcher to show causality towards a specific leadership outcome between two worlds.

The focus of this paper is to explore the relationship between in- and out-of-game behaviors in World of Warcraft and specifically in the realm of transformational leadership. Armed with this insight we may find our way to creating a game playlist for leaders that create situative experiences, skills, and association that benefit themselves, their team, and organization.

With multiple opportunities for leadership, flexibility to explore existing and developing practices, and nurturing relationships, MMOs provide an excellent sandbox environment for transformational leaders and transference behaviors. Leadership in-game is often transitory, thereby providing multiple opportunities for guild members to lead a guild/raid and further solidify their commitment to the group and salience to their identity (Reeves et al., 2008). Through multiple leadership opportunities, players can have an opportunity to explore, test, and develop as a leader. Given the examples and research provided, there is reason to believe that, leadership out-of-game also happens in-game. Since leadership opportunities are not as quick to appear out-of-game, new transformational leadership and active learning
behaviors obtained in-game require time and relevancy to be transmitted or spillover out-of-game (Xanthopoulou & Papagiannidis, 2010). In either world, leaders make sense of the world, develop relationships, create, and relay their vision for the future and invent new ways to reach that vision (Sloan, 2006). A leader’s actions and behaviors portray to the community their commitment and cognitively scaffold their salience of identity. Guilds offer the associations needed to obtain leadership opportunities in the form of meetups and raiding parties (Andrews, 2010). Through the relationship, groups in either environment provide the greatest form of identity for its members. Explained in accordance to SIDE theory (Williams, et al., 2011), a physically isolated member of a group may feel psychologically committed to social norms of an MMO group and yell, “For the Horde!” as a parting phrase in either in-or out-of-game environments.
Chapter 3. Research Design

Leadership is described as a process used by an individual to influence others within a group towards a common goal (Northouse, 2004). Framed by transformational leadership concepts, this study examined those processes to gain insight on the relationships of lived experiences in- and out-of-game. Scaffolded by nurturing in- and out-of-game communities, leaders create compelling relationships, which offer salient experiences that shape identity. This chapter will described how this study formulated the research questions to understand these relationships, a rubric for the potential of MMOs, the selection of key informants, the methods used to identify data, the processes developed for the collection of data and the format for presenting captured data for further analysis.

Research Questions

The relationship of a leader’s lived experiences with teams in- and out-of-games was at the center of this study. Therefore, the following questions provided the basis to understanding these patterns of in-game leaders and relationships of their in- and out-of-game identities. The questions are as follows:

1. What is the lived leadership experience of leaders of groups/teams in a massively multiplayer online world game?

2. What is the lived leadership experience of group/team leaders in an MMO game setting outside of game settings in their workplace?

3. Which, if any, characteristic of leadership development experiences appear in both of these settings?
With these questions as a foundation, a rubric was created to identify the potential data sources of leadership in MMOs.

**A Rubric for Potential MMOs**

To better understand the environment and experiences of MMOs as a sandbox for leadership, a rubric was developed from today’s most successful World of Warcraft guilds, as defined by WoWProgress (2012). As described in the previous chapter, highly social organizations can provide opportunities for leadership through

1. the development and formation of compelling relationships by peers and experts as a result of situative and salient communications and
2. a third place where leaders can explore and formulate their identity scaffolded by a Community of Practice (CoP).

Given the online environment of MMOs, this rubric described how the three data sources within this study can provide further insight to MMOs as a sandbox for leadership. These sources include the Guild site/blog, Leader Interviews and the Multifactor Leadership questionnaire (MLQ). Guild web/blog sites provide a historical record of individual accomplishments, group expectations and sense of community. Leadership interviews can yield individual experiences and guild practices that may or may not be described as transformational leadership. A multifactor leadership questionnaire was the third data source, which measured a leader’s self-perception as a transformational leader. Displayed in the rubric below (see Table 3), Compelling Relationships and MMOs as a third place or Community provides examples that would manifest themselves in the three data sources of this study. By triangulating these three data points we form a picture of leaders in- and out-of-game environments and the potential of MMOs as a sandbox for leaders.
Table 3.

**Leadership Sandbox Rubric for MMOs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Compelling Relationships/Experiences</th>
<th>Third place or Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guild Site/Blogs</strong></td>
<td>Forums or blogs that exchange and/or provide a record of dialog between guild members on changing behaviors, and experimentation that shape identity (Blinka, 2008; Turkle, 1995)</td>
<td>Evidence of a nurturing environment with member guidelines/rules, recruiting efforts, archived resources, social identification, culture centered around a practice (Reicher, et al., 1995; Wenger, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader Interviews</strong></td>
<td>Description or examples of transformational leadership where leader either motivated, inspired, or scaffold follower(s) to overcome a challenge (Goh &amp; Wasko, 2009; Lisk, et al., 2012)</td>
<td>Description or examples of transformational leadership to further the needs of followers and/or goals of the community through innovation/experimentation (Chen, 2010, 2012; Reeves et al., 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass &amp; Avolio, 2004)</strong></td>
<td>Leaders self perception to develop relationships with followers through idealized influence or inspirational motivation</td>
<td>Leaders self perception to develop relationships with followers through intellectual stimulation or individualized consideration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the principles and research of identity, communities of practice, and transformational leadership, the examples offered in the rubric for MMOs provide clear expectations for the researcher and key informants.

**Selection of Key informants**

Building on the work from previous research by Lindtner (2008), the researcher selected key informants for this study from the popular online game World of Warcraft. With over ten
million subscribers, the World of Warcraft MMO has the largest number of players (Entertainment, 2008) and opportunities to interact with in- and out-of-game leaders. Key informants of this study were consenting adults who had self-identified themselves as leaders, and have the ability to articulate their leadership role and identity in- and out-of-game. Contacted via email and or in person, the minimum number of key informants to be interviewed was six.

**Six key informants were contacted.** These key informants were self-identified to possess the *ideal* qualities identified by Tremblay (1957), as a role in community, knowledge, willingness, communicability and impartiality of the subject matter. These qualities were described in the following way:

- **Role in community.** Informants self identified to be leaders in- and out-of-game.
- **Knowledge.** Informants had knowledge of leadership concepts applicable to in- and out-of-game environments.
- **Willingness.** Informants were willing to share experiences and cooperate fully with the researcher as described in this chapter.
- **Communicability.** Informants were willing to communicate either face to face or by electronic means (via Skype) in accordance to the gathering of data requirements of this study.
- **Impartiality.** All efforts were made to determine any bias the informant may have towards the concepts in this study.

Furthermore, informants were verified during the interview process to meet the following criteria:
● **In-game.** Have a minimum of two years of membership with a guild that has completed at least eight in-game encounters (“WoWProgress”, 2012)

● In-game. Be a current or past raid/guild leader and/or guild officer who coordinates or who coordinated 10 – 25 players towards a common goal

● **Out-of-game.** Be a middle manager or above, with no fewer than three employees reporting directly to him or her

● Out-of-game. Must work in a leadership role for no less than two years

Using the qualities and criteria to identify informants attributes described earlier in this chapter, the researcher contacted the top guilds listed on a worldwide list based on achievement and encounters (“WoWProgress”, 2012). After numerous attempts to connect with leadership and guild officers, finding key informants proved difficult. All attempts were made to identify contact information for guild leadership via email, social networking and website contact information. After approximately three week without any response from guild leaders, the researcher reached out to his personal and professional communities requesting for informants who conformed to the identified qualities and criteria. Potential guild leaders were provided an Introduction Letter, soliciting informants. Eventually six key informants were self-identified as leaders in- and out-of-game, provided an informed letter of Consent (see Appendix C) and a time for a face to face interview scheduled. Official correspondence regarding this study described the purpose of the research, their role as a informant, processes designed to ensure confidentially and reminded that participation was voluntary.

**Ethical conduct and protection of human subjects.** The study and the researcher are in full compliance of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Pepperdine University’s Graduate School of Education and Psychology as identified on the college website (Pepperdine
University, 2012). Adhering to the institution’s standards and processes of research, all efforts were made to ensure the ethical conduct of the researcher and safeguarding of informant information. In preparation for this study, the researcher attended the required course to understand the requirements of protecting human subjects (see Appendix A), completed the Application Checklist (see Appendix B) and received approval by the Graduate and Professional School’s IRB to proceed with this study. As indicated in the Informed Consent form (see Appendix C), the researcher assured informants that he will safeguard confidentiality with the following statement,

All information you provide will remain confidential. The survey will not retain any personal or electronic information about you. Upon your permission to electronically record the interview, audio files and transcriptions will only be found on encrypted laptops or flash drives and deleted upon completion of the data analysis. Only the researcher will have access to your survey, interviews, data sheets, and informant list. The researcher will only report data in summary form and will not report individual scores.

In accordance with this statement all identifiable pertaining to the informant including first names, last name, known associates and guild information have replaced with an alphanumeric string identifiable only to the researcher. The researcher also provided an option to withdraw their participation with the following statement,

Please note that your completion and submission of the electronic survey indicates your consent to participate.

Lastly, a “thank you” letter was sent via email to each informant in appreciation for his or her voluntary participation in this research project. The instruments and processes by which
data was gathered and analyzed can be found in the subsequent sections labeled Methods, Data Collection and Data Analysis.

Methods

This study utilizes a mixed methods approach with two Leadership Identity Interviews (Phase I) and a Online Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Phase II). Phase I relies on two phenomenological interviews that explore in- and out-of-game leadership experiences. Described in greater detail in the section labeled, Leadership Interviews (Phase 1), qualitative and descriptive data were gathered to identify social and cultural patterns of leaders in- and out-of-game. In contrast, Phase II was a closed choice survey measure, which gathered quantitative data on each informant’s perceived leadership. This section provides an overview of the instrumentation used to gather data utilized in the study’s mixed methods approach, specifically the two leadership identity interviews and the online multifactored leadership questionnaire.

Instrumentation. Both leadership identity interviews and online survey were developed to explore the relationship between the experiences of leaders within the framework of transformational leadership, described in Chapter 2. The four main characteristics of Transformational Leadership were described in this way:

1. Idealized Influence or Charisma – Strong model with high standards of moral and ethical conduct.
2. Inspirational Motivation – Communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring to motivate.
3. Intellectual Stimulation – With a focus on creativity and innovation, create transparency of processes, and persuade members to actively participate through constructive and insightful collaboration.
4. Individualized consideration – Provide supportive environment and listen to the needs of followers.

All four leadership characteristics were measured qualitatively (Phase I) and quantitatively (Phase II).

**Phase I: leadership identity interviews.** Phase I provided qualitative data regarding the leadership identity of the informant, which described how the leader interacts with groups in- and out-of-game. The identity interviews consists of two parts and were performed separately, Avatar Demography Interview and Out-of-game Demography Interview. The questions used were based on a study by McCreery et al. (2012), which compares World of Warcraft player avatars with their out-of-game identity. Although the formatting was the same, questions have been altered to capture the informant’s role; group affiliation and leadership style both in- and out-of-game. Grounded in identity and leadership theory, this two-part instrument (in- and out-of-game) was created to explore a leader’s projective identity. From the work of Gee (2003), an informant’s projective identity was the bridge linking in- and out-of-game environments; defined as one’s out-of-game person AS one’s In-game character. An individual’s projective leadership identity was the phenomena studied and this model has aided in the discovery of relationships between the context of a leader’s in-game experiences and its potential for transfer out-of-game. With statements and formatting from “Defining the Virtual Self” (McCreery et al., 2012, p. 981); additional questions were written to explore the projective identity of transformational leaders. As described in the limitations section of Chapter 1, the questions may consciously or unconsciously cause informants to form relationships between their in and out of game leadership experiences. The questions are designed to uncover unconscious or tacit knowledge that may already exist in the individual’s behavior preference to display role
characteristics of a transformational leader: Role Model (Idealized Influence), Orator (Inspirational Motivation), Innovator (Intellectual Stimulation) and Coach (Individualized Consideration). As part of the leadership identity interview, informants have been asked a series of open-ended questions that invite the informant to openly share their in-game leadership experiences; and in a separate interview their experiences in the workplace.

The two part Leadership Identity Interview Protocol Instrument (see Appendix E and F) consist of statements and questions covering four points of interest regarding transformational leadership of in-game leaders (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. Total allotted time of the study was 60 minutes for each informant and each interview. Given the time constraint, the researcher was mindful of the time utilized by the informant for each interview. Each session was electronically recorded and transcribed by the researcher. As described in the Informed Consent Letter (see Appendix C), all possible steps have been employed to ensure the informant’s information remains confidential, including the assignment of alphanumeric identifiers throughout the study. The following sections titled In-Game and Out-of-Game, describe in detail the questions asked of informants and developed as part of the Opportunities for Transformational Leadership rubric, described in Chapter 2.

In-game. The first interview performed was the Avatar Demography. This interview allowed informants to articulate perceptions of their leadership behavior in-game with groups and small teams. With questions developed from “Defining the Virtual Self” (McCreery et al., 2012, p. 981) and concepts of Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2004), informants were asked to provide leadership examples of situative experiences that may translate to out-of-game settings. Consisting of only five questions, the researcher was provided
an opportunity to ask probing questions to understand the wider context of the informant’s response. Listed below were “The Avatar Demography Interview” questions asked of all informants:

1. What’s your role in the main guild you play, in *guild name* in the game World of Warcraft?
   
   Probes:
   
   • Prior to your current position, can you describe your previous roles and positions held in your current or previous guilds?
   
   • What was your first in-game leadership experience?
   
   • Can you tell me of an in-game failure that shaped you as a leader?

2. Do you have a guild title? e.g. Guild master, raid leader, tell me about that.
   
   Probes:
   
   • Have you ever experienced an opportunity to step up into a leadership role even though it was NOT explicitly part of your position?
   
   • How would you describe your management role at your guild? Is it limited or do you have the freedom to implement a vision or affect change?

3. What is your role in guild activities?
   
   Probes:
   
   • Do you schedule and invite members for raids/dungeons/social activities? Tell me about that.
   
   • Do you organize the raid group and assign roles? e.g. who’s healing the tank, who’s healing the party? Tell me about that.
Do you study strategies, lead conversations, and inform players about an upcoming boss? Tell me about that.

Do you promote members in [guild name]? Assign duties such as clearing out the guild bank or providing raid consumables? Tell me about that.

Do you help guide goals, directions or vision of the group?

4. What role do you have in dealing with guild members?

Probes:

• Have you ever had to deal with conflicts in the guild or in a raid party? Tell me about that.

• Have you ever kicked anyone off a raid or out of the guild? Tell me about that.

• Have you ever struggled to keep together a group (after multiple wipes or splintering guild)? Tell me about that.

• Have you been involved in mentoring new players or players new to their class? Tell me about that.

5. Is there an aspect of your out-of-game (in your workplace) leadership experience that you call upon in your in-game environment? If so, in what context?

**Out-of-game.** A second separate interview was performed with the informant called the Individual Demography. This interview allows informants to articulate their perceptions of their out-of-game leadership behavior, (in the workplace) with groups and small teams. With questions also developed from “Defining the Virtual Self” (McCreery et al., 2012, p. 981) and concepts of Transformational Leadership, informants were asked to provide leadership examples of situative out-of-game experiences that may translate to in-game world settings
(Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2004). Consisting of five questions and a brief opportunity for reflection at the beginning of the interview, the researcher was provided an opportunity to ask probing questions to understand the wider context of the informant’s response. This second interview provided informants the opportunity to verbalize any overlap or relationship between in- and out-of-game environments. Listed below are “The Individual Demography Interview” questions and “Reflection Statement/Questions” asked of all informants:

Reflection statement/question: When we last talked, you mentioned your guild actions and the roles you play within your guild. As you think about the things we’ve discussed in the previous interview, do you feel there is any overlap or parallels in your relationship and/or experiences between guild members and out-of-game experiences at work?

1. How many employees are part of your team? What’s the name of the company or institution in which you are employed? What is your role as a leader in your organization?
   Probes:
   • Prior to your current position, can you describe your previous roles and positions held?
   • What was your first leadership experience in the workplace?
   • Can you tell me of a “failure” in your current or past workplace that shaped you as a leader?

2. What is your operational title? e.g. Supervisor, Manager, Dean, President
   Probes:
• Have you ever experienced an opportunity to step up into a leadership role even though it was NOT explicitly part of your position?

• How would you describe your management role at your organization? Is it limited or do you have the freedom to implement a vision or affect change?

3. What is your role in your organization/department?

   Probes:
   • Do you schedule and/or invite other departments to participate in projects or initiatives? Tell me about that.
   • Do you organize the team group and assign roles? e.g. who is coordinating operations, communicating to administration? Tell me about that.
   • Do you execute or provide research, lead conversations, and inform team members about an upcoming project important to your department or institution? Tell me about that.
   • Do you promote members in of your department or institution? Assign administrative, operational or communications duties? Tell me about that.
   • Do you help guide goals, directions or vision of the group?

4. What role do you have in dealing with department, or employees in your institution?

   Probes:
   • Have you ever had to deal with departmental or institutional conflicts? Tell me about that.
   • Have you ever fired anyone? Tell me about that.
   • Have you ever struggled to keep your project team on task? Tell me about that.
• Have you been involved in mentoring new employees in your organization of department? Tell me about that.

5. Is there an aspect of your in-game leadership that you call upon in your out-of-game workplace environment? If so, in what context?

**Phase II: online multifactor leadership questionnaire.** Phase II was an online Multifactor Leadership questionnaire. The online multifactor leadership questionnaire consists of 43 descriptive questions that measure a informant’s leadership behavior (see Appendix D). Considered a benchmark in the measuring of transformational leadership, this instrument has been researched and validated across cultures and organizations. The purpose of this questionnaire was to identify the informant’s perception of their transformational leadership style as described in the previous chapter under the heading, “Leadership Rubric”. Provided by MindGarden (2012) and developed by Bass (1985), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) assesses the informant’s leadership behaviors as they pertain to transformational leadership styles. Taking only 15 minutes to administer, it can identify the frequency of transformational leadership characteristics based on informant responses. Corresponding to assigned Phase I alphanumeric identifiers, each informant was reassigned appropriate identifier for the second instance of data collection in this study.

The two instruments described in this section played an important role in the gathering of data in this mixed methods approach. Framed by the four transformational leadership characteristics individual influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, they served to be the containers of in- and out-of-game informant experiences. The first instrument described as Phase I, consists of two interviews, performed separately and designed to capture qualitative data illustrating the lived in- and out-of-game
leadership experiences. Described as Avatar Demography (see Appendix E), the first of two interviews captured the informant’s In-game leadership experiences. The second interview, Individual Demography (see Appendix F), provided an illustration of out-of-game or workplace leadership. Both interviews captured the informant’s leadership role, context of their experiences and relationship with their followers. Consisting of 43 questions, hosted online by an industry stand and delivered electronically, Phase II was a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which provided quantitative data on the informant's perceived leadership. These instruments provided the vehicle from which data was collected.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Data gathered through the described instruments served to establish a foundation from which to discuss the informant’s leadership role and artifacts that scaffold their in- and out-of-game communities. Utilizing the described leadership identity interviews, the online Multifactored Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and requirements of key informants, this section will describe the specific process used to gather data for later synthesis and analysis within the framework of transformational leadership characteristics. The specific procedures described for data collection serve to document what was achieved and provide best practices for future researchers interested in duplicating any component of this study. The specific steps to collect data were accomplished by contacting informants; scheduling and completing the interviews; the completion of leadership surveys; and the evaluation guild website/forums.

**Contacting informants.** Using the key informants attributes described earlier in this chapter, the researcher identified and contacted the top guilds listed on a worldwide list based on achievement and encounters (“WoWProgress”, 2012). With the use of social media and information from guild websites, the researcher sent introduction messages to identified guild
leaders, which included the researcher's name and introduction letter of intent (see Appendix G). After a number of failed attempts to solicit participation, the researcher turned to his in- and out-of-game community. A number of informants were very interested in participating in this study. Informants interested in participating in the study provided their contact information and email address. Informants received study information via email or in person. Having read the requirements to participate in this study, approximately half of the informants chose not to participate without indicating any reason; while others indicated they did not meet the minimum qualifications. Once informants self identified themselves as leaders in an out-of-game, the researcher provided an Informed Consent Letter (see Appendix C) and scheduled a time for interview.

**Scheduling and completing interviews.** Within the requirements of the study, all efforts were made to accommodate the informant’s availability to participate in the interview, via face to face or Skype. The researcher contacted the informant to schedule two leadership interviews that may be completed separately. All informants requested to receive the interviews in succession, with a break of approximately five to fifteen minutes separating the first and second interview. As required by the Information Research Board, each informant was provided and completed the Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities, which was signed in person or provided electronically. Prior to the first interview question, the researcher confirmed the electronic recording equipment (via IPad app, MicPro) was in good working order and the participant had knowledge of and agreed to being recorded. Upon verification of the equipment, the researcher engaged the informant with two separate leadership identity interview instruments.
Utilizing the In-Game Leadership Identity instrument described earlier in this chapter or Avatar Demography (see Appendix E), informants provided avatar demographics, the name of their guild and described their in-game experiences as leaders. With a relaxed and conversational tone, each respondent was asked the primary questions and given the appropriate probing questions based on the content of their initial response. Feeling at ease in an open environment, each respondent shared thoughts and insights pertaining to conflict and leadership challenges. With the completion of the last response, informants were welcome to take a five to fifteen minute break. During the break, informants were asked if they would like to continue with the second interview. All respondents agreed to continue to the second set of questions after the break.

Having heard the first set of interview questions, informants appeared better prepared and relaxed for the Out-of-Game Leadership Identity instrument or Individual Demography (see Appendix F). Much like the previous interview, but with a focus on out-of-game leadership, respondents were asked questions pertaining to their role and activities in the workplace. Having developed a trusting relationship in short time, respondents freely shared thoughts and insights related to their in- and out-of-game leadership experiences. With the completion of the final interview each respondent was provided an opportunity to reflect and offer some closing thoughts. All informants were thanked for their participation in the interviews and informed of a leadership survey to arrive via email.

Preparing the in- and out-of-game interviews for future analysis was the researcher’s final step in this process. All voice recordings during the interviews would be transcribed only by the researcher into a word processor for easy editing, using a combination of ITunes, MS Word and and MicPro. All interview data was stored in a secure location, with the four steps of
transcription defined by Giorgi (1985) followed; (a) One reads the entire description in order to get a general sense of the whole statement; (b) the researcher goes back to the beginning and reads through the text once more with the specific aim of discriminating "meaning units" from within a psychological perspective and with a focus on the phenomenon being researched; (c) the researcher then goes through all of the meaning units and expresses the psychological insight contained in them more directly; (d) Researcher synthesizes all of the transformed meaning units into a consistent statement. All names mentioned during the interview and identities of informants were removed from the transcripts to protect confidentiality. Only the researcher knew the identity of the informant and the transcript of the interview was renamed to an alphanumeric identifier.

**Completing the questionnaire.** As the source of quantitative data of this study, the online Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was delivered to informants via their email address. Obtained at the beginning of the study, email addresses for all interviewees were entered into the MindGarden (2012) survey delivery system by the researcher. The delivered survey contains a link within the body of the email message directing the informant to the MindGarden (2012) survey site. To access this the survey, informants must create a login account with the MindGarden (2012) provider. The creation of an account was one of the biggest stumbling blocks for informants to complete this survey. To encourage the completion of the online MLQ, the researcher would remind informants multiple times to create the required account and complete the forty-three question survey (see Appendix D). Once the informant accesses and completes the questionnaire designed to measure their self-perception of leadership, the researcher database for the study was updated and ready for analysis. Only the
researcher has access to this information; all the scores were automatically tabulated by the provider and available online.

**Guild website/forum evaluation.** Obtained during the In-game interview, the informant guild website was evaluated for the four transformational leadership characteristics described in Chapter 2, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify if the informant or the community in which he lead exhibits characteristics that may or may not have been evident during the In-game interview or perceived during the MLQ. Deindividualized theory explains that the greater the alignment of behaviors and social norms between identity and community, the greater the likelihood the individual will be seen as a leader. The leader is a reflection of the group. Therefore as the online representation of a community, the website reflected the characteristics and behaviors expected of the informant. Public, private, social or hardcore, a guild’s online presence to the internet can vary even with the self identified in- and out-of-game leaders who met the criteria of leadership described earlier under the heading titled, “Six key informants were contacted”. Fortunately, for the informants whose websites were closed to everyone with the exception of members, the leaders were kind enough to provide a detailed verbal description of the activities, tools and processes of the guild. Using the four transformational leadership characteristics as a framework to evaluate the website, examples were gathered and compared with the qualitative and quantitative data provided by the informant.

Grouped into these four main sections, this section provided insight and best practices obtained from the collection of data with a mixed methods approach. Utilizing the instruments described earlier in this chapter, data was gathered by contacting the informants, scheduling and
completing interviews, completing the questionnaire and evaluating the informant’s guild website/form. The specific steps taken by the researcher for each informant included the following:

1. Used in- and out-of-game community contacts as informants.
2. Provided an introduction and letter of intent to potential guild leaders via email or social media. (see Appendix G)
3. Provided Informed Consent Letter to the informant after self identified as an in- and out-of-game leader. (see Appendix C)
4. Scheduled interviews with informant indicating the time constraints of each separate interview.
5. The researcher contacted the informant to schedule two leadership interviews completed in the following order:
   a. First interview to discuss their Avatar Demography (see Appendix E)
   b. Second interview to discuss their Individual Demography (see Appendix F)
6. The researcher contacted the informant providing them with access to an online Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) designed specifically to measure transformational leadership characteristics. (see Appendix D)
7. The researcher followed up with informants to ensure the completion of the online survey
8. Utilized the Opportunities for Transformational Leadership rubric described in Chapter Two, the researcher evaluated guild website/public forum content for evidence of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.
With the data gathered, the results were synthesized and formatted within the framework of transformational leadership, creating opportunities to review data results and identify emerging themes.

**Making Sense of the Data Results**

Building upon the mixed method two phase instruments and the data collection procedures described earlier, rubrics and profile structures were developed within which data was synthesized and analyzed to identify patterns and emerging themes pertaining to in- and out-of-game leadership experiences. Using the four transformational leadership characteristics of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, a rubric was developed to capture sub-characteristics discovered during the transcription of informant interviews and the guild website/forum evaluation. Within the framework of the rubrics lay the embodied data of the informant’s lived in- and out-of-game leadership experience. The portrayal of qualitative and quantitative data was accomplished by developing a leadership centered rubric, describing the Opportunities for Transformational Leadership sub-characteristics, connecting the data to the rubric, creating the informant profile and utilizing analytical techniques to understand in- and out-of-game live experiences of leaders.

**Developing the rubric.** During the transcription process, a great deal of qualitative data was gathered during the in- and out-of-game interviews. To better understand this data, the experiences of informants were framed by the four primary characteristics of transformational leaders with expected examples of in- and out-of-game leadership experiences. Built upon the primary four characteristics of an earlier sub-heading (Instrumentation), these experiences were redefined and described with keywords and examples in the following way:
Idealized influence or charisma. (Keywords include: rules, vision, standards, manage, etc.) Strong model with high standards of moral and ethical conduct

- *In-game example* – providing a clear direction for a guild and enforcing loot policy
- *Out-of-game example* – directing, coaching or advising workplace employees

Inspirational motivation. (Keywords include: encourage, understand, communicate, cheerleading, rally, etc.) – Communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring to motivate by

- *In-game example* – describing to the raid team what will happen if they succeed or fail in performing their duties
- *Out-of-game example* – delivering a motivational speech to workplace staff

Intellectual stimulation. (Keywords include: tactical, strategic, metrics, data, theorycrafting, etc.) – Solve problems with creativity and innovation, transparency of processes, and active participation through constructive and insightful collaboration

- *In-game example* – Presenting a strategy or tactic to the raid team to overcome an In-game boss
- *Out-of-game example* – Using data and/or collaboration to solve a workplace challenge

Individualized consideration. (Keywords include: Mentoring, listening, nurturing, etc.) – Provide supportive environment and listen to the needs of followers
• In-game example - Mentoring guild members before and after a boss fight
• Out-of-game example - providing training opportunities for employees

With the grouping of informant experiences into the above four categories, additional sub-characteristics emerged to form themes that provided greater granularity to the lived experiences of in- and out-of-game leaders. These sub-characteristics found in- and out-of-game provide the central framework that scaffolds our understanding of leadership.

Opportunities for transformational leadership sub characteristics. The rubric described as Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub Characteristics was created to accommodate emergent sub-themes to better understand and categorize the lived in- and out-of-game leadership of informants. These sub-themes identify an additional level of complexity within the four main characteristics that were evident amongst the six informants and In-game community. By applying this rubric consistently across the lived experiences of in- and out-of-game contexts, we can identify relationships between leaders and followers previously hidden by the broader definition roles and activities of leaders. From the emergent themes of the six informants in this study, the four initial transformational leadership characteristics can be further defined by the following sub-characteristics:

1. Idealized influence or charisma – Strong model with high standards of moral and ethical conduct. A sub-characteristic may include a leader who:
   • is in a role which can be seen;
   • models desired behavior in followers;
   • demonstrates decision making based on moral/ethical/principled concepts;
   • acts as a representative of group and
• describes expectations leader has of followers role.

2. Inspirational motivation – Communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring to motivate. A sub-characteristic may include a leader who:

• persuades followers to consider alternative solutions;
• encourages followers to continue participation in group goals and activities;
• connects values of the group to values of the individual;
• communicates to followers before, during and/or after event to encourage continued participation and/or feedback on performance and
• provides an opportunity for reflection to strengthen resolve (through a story or anecdote).

3. Intellectual stimulation – With a focus on creativity and innovation, create transparency of processes, and persuade members to actively participate through constructive and insightful collaboration. A sub-characteristic may include a leader who:

• is inclusive and transparent pertaining to all decisions;
• works with followers to develop data driven solutions;
• develops processes for continuous improvement;
• creates a culture of problem solving: by debriefing situations, events, strategy talk, focusing on iteration rather than failure;
• presents strategic and/or tactical recommendations for discussion and
• knowledge of followers skills and abilities for success.

4. Individualized consideration – Provide supportive environment and listen to the needs of followers. A sub-characteristic may include a leader who:
• takes into consideration the followers personal situation;
• connects values of the individual to the values of the group;
• nurtures the development of skills and abilities of followers and
• is reflective and thoughtful to the needs of followers.

With each informant described sub-characteristic expanding the definition of the four initial transformational leadership characteristics, examples were provided to illustrate the complexity and relationships between in- and out-of-game leaders.

**Connecting the data to the rubric.** As a framework to understanding the relationships between in- and out-of-game experiences of leaders with followers and their community, the rubric was applied to the transcribed interviews, and guild website/forums. To further illustrate the supporting themes, excerpts were provided to anchor interview and guild website/forums characteristics to the transformational leadership sub-characteristics.

Portrayed below in a table format, the first rubric titled, “Interviews: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics” provided in- and out-of-game interview excerpts that correspond to the identified leadership sub-characteristics. Divided into three columns, the leftmost column included a specific row for each sub-characteristic, middle column for In-game interview excerpts and the rightmost column including relevant informant workplace descriptions.
Table 4.

*Interviews: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Characteristics Definitions (applied, behavioral)</th>
<th>In-game (MMO) Excerpts from interviews</th>
<th>Out-of-game Excerpts from interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Idealized Influence (IN)**
  “Charisma”– Strong role model with high standards of moral and ethical conduct:
  “Visible Leadership”, Is in a role which can be seen; | As an officer the members directed the angry player to me. | I’m talking to a lot of directors and VPs and figuring out where the gaps are. |
| “Setting the Example”, Models desired behavior in followers; | So I was the tank and so I was the person who comes up to the biggest monster and punches him right in the nose so he stays mad at me instead of the fragile little mage and rogues. Being an instigator helps. (Ha) | I got my MBA while I was at [company] and studying Akido. You can do it; you just have to schedule it. |
| “Decision Making”, Demonstrates decision making based on moral/ethical/principled concepts; | Truth be told that In-game the most important thing is that folks understood that you would kick them if they behaved badly. | Employees in the company usually have a desired business outcome. They may disagree about how to achieve that. But in general there’s always a common direction, “What do they want to do for the customer” |
| “Representing the Group”, Acts as a representative of group | We had some very good players, so getting invites to groups who could succeed all the way to the end really wasn’t hard. Especially since my character was a tank and people always need tanks and I always had a tank alt. | My job is to put into programs and partner with other groups who do create content, “Go write this” and “Don’t write that” and basically go identify real customer needs and connect those up to real writing resources. |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Characteristics Definitions (applied, behavioral)</th>
<th>In-game (MMO) Excerpts from interviews</th>
<th>Out-of-game Excerpts from interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Leader’s Expectations”, Describes expectations leader has of followers role</td>
<td>Teamwork, coming together and helping one another. That’s what a good raid group does, in my own personal raid philosophy and that’s also what a good restaurant does.</td>
<td>So basically I would give them guidelines and say, this is what you need to do to get content into Windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation (IM) “Inspiring Others” – Communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring to motivate</td>
<td>My job is to have a fairly calm voice and be able to call out to people, when they’re standing in the fire and tell them when they are about to die.</td>
<td>“Come on guys let’s rally up, gather together and push across that bridge. We have to take this other stuff on this map or we’re going to lose.” I’ve found that to be a truism, especially in business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Alternative Solutions”, Persuades followers to consider alternative solutions;</td>
<td>There was a certain amount of management work there in terms of like…sometimes softening things out when people had disagreements.</td>
<td>Cheerleading. It’s basically identifying, are they ready or not or are they willing or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Encouraging Participation”, Encourages followers to continue participate in group goals and activities</td>
<td>It really is a type of service type organization as opposed to straight uberness. There were some cases where we had some really really great players, but we asked to leave because all they cared about was the loot.</td>
<td>I ended up managing a very successful management team because I told people, “How are you going to go to the next level? And how are you going to survive?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Connecting Group Values”, Connects values of the group to the values of the individual</td>
<td>At the daily triage process is called WAR and there is a lot of shouting… a lot of “oh my gosh, there’s this problem what are we going to do about it?” So, being there and working through some of those dire circumstances was very, very useful in raids where fireballs are falling from the ceiling.</td>
<td>I’ve generally found that having that communication with them and making sure I understand exactly what they’re trying to accomplish is what works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Communicate Performance”, Communicates to followers before, during and/or after event to encourage continued participation and/or feedback on performance;</td>
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<tr>
<th>Role Characteristics Definitions (applied, behavioral)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>“Insight Through Reflection”, Provides an opportunity for reflection to strengthen resolve (through a story or anecdote)</td>
<td>There was this one guy who was the best rogue I had ever seen and he was absolutely and technically right about every detail he tried to coach the other rogues through, and so help me, no one could stand him. He was merciless and he was constantly telling them… “No that’s wrong.” “You’ve got to do this.” “What’s the matter with you? Don’t you want to be the best?” and the answer was… He just wasn’t reaching them at their level, so that taught me a lot.</td>
<td>Whenever I go to a new role I look around for people who are turtled up in Alterac Valley and I try to present those metrics to them to show them that basically, “Look I know you think the most important thing for you to succeed is for you to do the same job, you’ve been doing forever, but the truth is the actual point of the game is over here and you just have to go over there and do that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</strong> “Collaborating towards a solution” – With a focus on creativity and innovation, create transparency of processes, and persuade members to actively participate through constructive and insightful collaboration. “Transparency”, Is inclusive and transparent pertaining to all decisions</td>
<td>My primary role is that of raid leader and that’s basically understanding the strategy for winning the fight against the bosses and talking people through their roles during the action.</td>
<td>I spent a lot of real-time, energy-managing writers, and now I spend a lot of time instead being the key strategist who advises the folks who manage the writing teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Data Driven solutions”, Works with followers to develop data driven solutions</td>
<td>I’m really good a strategies. If we're struggling, that’s when I speak up and say… “I think we’re struggling because of these things.”</td>
<td>I would drive the schedule and there was a lot of coordination around there involving 200 people just outside of my team creating content in support of us.</td>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Continuous Improvement”, Develops processes for continuous improvement</td>
<td>So one of the things we had (officers) was to use private in bind (text based communication) to speak about strategies and sometimes things were so idiotic that there was nothing to say but “What the #$@!#!”</td>
<td>I had people who worked for me to figure out the “What” and that leads to business requirements and authoring tools and back end systems that help define the “How”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Culture of Problem Solving”, Creates a culture of problem solving: by debriefing situations, events, strategy talk, focusing on iteration rather than failure</td>
<td>And to remind them, “okay guys this is the point when you, the person over here… if you don’t do your thing. We’re all going to fail at this and have to…You know, die resurrect and try again.”</td>
<td>As I manage more, I spent far more time on high level strategic planning, “these are the programs we need to have in place and you guys don’t need me to be there micromanaging things here or there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Recommends Strategies”, Presents strategic and/or tactical recommendations for discussion</td>
<td>The tactical guy. Being the guide and lead for going through In-game content to be successful.</td>
<td>What you need to do is go around measuring what the customer is asking for and what I was able to show to them was that 20% of the content they were writing… no one ever read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Solutions on Follower Abilities”, Knowledge of followers skills and abilities for success</td>
<td>So, we’re doing an attempt and finally I said. “No! Just press one in 3,2,1, bam!” and he would push it. Then I would say “Press Two in 3,2,1”. So I just broke it down to the numbers.</td>
<td>Starting a brand new team and understanding the problems to solve, those are two very different problems. So basically came in and understood what I needed and built my team very slowly over time</td>
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<td>(Continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individualized Consideration</strong> (IC) “Nurturing Others” – provide a supportive environment and listen to the needs of followers: “Considering the situation”, Takes into consideration the followers personal situation</td>
<td>“You know what, you aren’t kind of not making it tonight, maybe in a little while, after we’ve mastered this fight and we’re a little over geared for it, you can come back an try again. But for now… we’re going to have to go with someone else who’s got a little bit more experience.”</td>
<td>I had people following me around at every point because they knew that… I knew their background and what they could do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Connecting Individual Values”</strong>, Connects values of the individual to the values of the group</td>
<td>We felt that everyone had something to contribute.</td>
<td>“Okay, were not going to talk about what projects you were on this week, but you’re not only going to come back and tell me what your goals are…you’re also going to tell me about the classes that you take.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Nurturing Followers”</strong>, Nurtures the development of skills and abilities of followers</td>
<td>Be the kind of guild where you could go in and play a game with your kids and if you have a problem someone would come and help you out.</td>
<td>I was really good about getting people to pursue MBAs or certifications. I believe in that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Followers Needs”</strong>, Is reflective and thoughtful to the needs of followers.</td>
<td>When you have a group of folks who have a range of ages from teens to their sixties, its very important that you don’t have folks that think they can just do anything and say anything, because there’s a huge generational gap</td>
<td>We schedule a meeting and we discuss it in a fair, firm and friendly manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also portrayed in a table format, the second rubric titled, “Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics” provided images of the leader’s guild website tools, artifacts and discussions that anchor In-game characteristics with
those of transformational leaders. Missing from this portrayal were the out-of-game examples leaders had already provided when describing their workplace environment. Much like the previous rubric, the left most column included rows for each leadership sub-characteristic while the right column included images taken from the guild website along with a brief description of the community’s activities and artifacts. All screenshots of guild and informant activities in future sections have been altered to protect their identity and utilized to enhance a greater understanding of in-game transformational leadership characteristics. Its inclusion provides insight to the thought processes and complexity of leader and follower engagement, communication and interaction in an in-game environment.

Table 5.

**Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Characteristics Definitions (applied, behavioral)</th>
<th>EXS: Guild Website/Forums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idealized Influence or Charisma (IN)</strong> – Strong role model with high standards of moral and ethical conduct: Is in a role which can be seen;</td>
<td>Provided a list of Guild leader names; Website provides a list of current officers names, titles, rank and responsibilities. Example: Current Officers: J****(Guild Master), P*** and W****. All issues must be brought to the attention of one of these people first. No drama will be tolerated … in any form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models desired behavior in followers;</td>
<td>Website provides a complete list of guild rules and expectations, sometimes titled, “10 East Ones” or “The Rules”. Example(s): 1) Be respectful to ALL players (guild members and non-guild members) 2) Be patient and helpful. 3) Maintain a positive attitude.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates decision making based on moral/ethical/principled concepts;</td>
<td>An example of a list of rules posted on the guild website titled “Reputation” included the following text: Our reputation as a guild is important to us and as long as you wear the guild emblem, you should act respectful to your guildies, their families, and especially in public chat or pug raids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts as a representative of group</td>
<td>Rules pertaining to representation and invitation to a guild are restricted to a selected few. To avoid confusion, a guild website made the following distinction between personal invitations vs. recruitment. Personal Invitations: All proven member are authorized to request an invitation to the guild on behalf of another player. A member may choose to make a request for a real life friend, a WoW friend or acquaintance. Recruitment: Officers recruit members through a combination of personal invitations and periodic announcements in WoW in-game trade chat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describes expectations leader has of followers role</td>
<td>Guilds provide specific expectations of it leaders in a post titled, “Becoming a leader”: To be considered, the candidate must be a team, player, abide by all rules, consistently lend his/her expertise and craftiness to the guild, offer solid advice to help other members achieve their goals and be exalted with the guild.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation (IM) – Communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring to motivate</td>
<td>Guild website/forum provides examples of member (guild/follower) examples describing proposed and alternative solutions and/or ideas to overcoming in-game challenges. In one example as member created a succinct diagram of an in game story concept, making it easier of members to understand the historical timeline which involve time travel.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Encourages followers to continue participate in group goals and activities</td>
<td>Forums or list for raid activities encouraging guild participation. Guild websites are filled with group snapshots with a vanquished boss in the background. (See Chapter 4, Figure 17, p. 140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connects values of the group to the values of the individual</td>
<td>Forums, galleries, and list for raid activities have embedded within them values and expectations between leader and follower. For example members seeking heroic challenges may seek out guild leaders found in an image with a fallen boss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates to followers before, during and/or after event to encourage continued participation and/or feedback on performance;</td>
<td>Some guilds also have posted criterion to determine member performance and feedback. For example one website describes their evaluations in the following way: Raiders are required to bring 100% to every raid and ever encounter. A number of things will be examined during the raid week and those proving to be the lowest dps/healing, just under performing in general will warrant a chat with an officer. Remember evaluations are there for a reason and sometimes a raider may no longer perform at the level we require as such we may inform you that we are going to replace you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides an opportunity for reflection to strengthen resolve (through a story or anecdote)</td>
<td>Forums or list for raid/guild activities encouraging guild participation. Guild websites and forums contain topics that encourage guild participation and greater resolve to in game challenges. In one example a guild leader began a thread called “Game Corner”, in it he discussed general topics on challenges facing the guild. Although the stories and examples did provide members of his leadership team, it generated a great deal of discussion and communication within the guild.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation (IS) – With a focus on creativity and innovation, create transparency of processes, and persuade members to actively participate through constructive and insightful collaboration: Is inclusive and transparent pertaining to all decisions</td>
<td>List of loot received at their last raid provides transparency of guild participation and distribution of in game rewards. These lists are maintained by the guild and external databases designed to create transparency and provide leadership with in tools to monitor performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Works with followers to develop data driven solutions</td>
<td>Data and/or performance evaluation tools such as <em>World of Logs</em> are used to measure guild and member (See Chapter 4, Figure 19, p. 138). Reports can vary in complexity containing a variety of performance statistics and graphs over a given time period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops processes for continuous improvement</td>
<td>Guild websites generally provide a list game tools and resources from which to obtain a variety of in game information for continuous improvement. The guild list typically provides the name of the resource, the URL, and a brief description of the site and what it may offer to visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates a culture of problem solving: by debriefing situations, events, strategy talk, focusing on iteration rather than failure</td>
<td>Strategy discussion and signup list a typically lead by an officer or leader within the guild. He provides the background and information to raid members and coordinates who will be participating in the activity. Examples of such a discussion and signup can be found on both websites and guild forums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents strategic and/or tactical recommendations for discussion</td>
<td>Videos and/or in depth strategy videos posted in the forums provide members insight on what to expect during an in game encounter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of followers skills and abilities for success</td>
<td>Leader boards provide opportunities to communicate and encourage the development of specific skills and abilities within a guild. They typically provide, the player name, class/spec, effective date, Boss, DPS, Damage Done and %/Total.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualized Consideration (IC)</strong> – provide a supportive environment and listen to the needs of followers: Takes into consideration the followers personal situation</td>
<td>The guild recognizing something unique about its followers. A number of guilds (especially social) make the extra effort to connect with members beyond the game, such as celebrating in or out of game birthdays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connects values of the individual to the values of the group</td>
<td>Guild activities where individuals share values and begin a dialog to form a supportive environment through a common experience. <em>(Music)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Role Characteristics Definitions (applied, behavioral)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurtures the development of skills and abilities of followers</td>
<td>Guild provided or directed tools that encourage the development or improvement of in-game performance. Ranging from on-demand graphs or mentorship within a class is a common activity to nurturing its members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is reflective and thoughtful to the needs of followers.</td>
<td>Guilds have an online suggestion box to gather member feedback on group events and activities. The recruitment of new members also provides leader and follower alike the opportunity to share expectations and begin a dialog prior to membership.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Informant profile template.** Divided into six sections, the informant template provides a consistent portrayal of qualitative and quantitative data gathered on the lived experiences of leaders in- and out-of-game; described as Informant Profile, In-game Leadership, Out-of-game Leadership, The Guild Forum/Website, The Survey, and Leadership relationships among interview, website and survey.

The first section labeled, “Informant Profile”, provides basic in- and out-of-game demographics to include, sex, class, affiliation, race, guild/workplace information, technical abilities; also including hours of play, technical proficiency and history within the game.

The next two sections, “In-game Leadership” and “Out-of-game Leadership”, utilize the Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Categories rubric describing the relationships of leaders with their followers. Within the context of their in- and out-of-game leadership, the “In-game Leadership” section will provide detailed examples obtained only from activities as a guild officer or leader; whereas the “Out-of-game Leadership” section will contain experiences specifically from the workplace. Common terms for each sub-title correspond to the transformational leadership sub-characteristics as way to describe the lived in-and out-of-game experiences of leaders. “Charisma” describes the *Idealized Influence* of each
informant. The following sub-headings correspond to the italicized leadership sub-characteristic:

- *Visible leadership* identifies how the leader is in a role, which can be seen, interacting with followers.
- *Setting the example* emphasizes how a leader models desired behavior in followers.
- *Decision making* demonstrates how a leader arrives at decisions based on moral/ethical/principled concepts.
- *Representing the group* provides an example of the leader representing their guild or out-of-game workplace to an external group or peer group.
- *Leader’s expectations* expresses how a leader sees followers fulfilling their role as a member of a guild or workplace.

*Inspiring Others* provides examples of leaders who communicate in such a way to inspire and motivate, *Inspirational Motivation*. The following sub-headings correspond to the italicized leadership sub-characteristic:

- *Alternative solutions* outlines the leader’s methods and ability to persuade followers to consider alternative solutions.
- *Encouraging participation* illustrates the leaders ability to revitalize followers into continued participation in group goals and activities.
- *Connecting group values* identifies the leader’s understanding and bridging the values, missions and goals of the guild or workplaces with followers.
- *Communicate performance* recounts communications of leaders with followers to ensure continued participation and/or performance feedback.
• *Insight through reflection* conveys an image of the leader providing an opportunity for reflection to strengthen the resolve and or refocus followers.

*Collaborating towards a solution* describes a collaborative, data driven, problem solving exchange between followers and leaders called *Intellectual Stimulation*. The following sub-headings correspond to the italicized leadership sub-characteristic:

• *Transparency* details an environment of collaboration that is inclusive and transparent pertaining to all decisions.

• *Data driven solutions* imparts the importance of data for leaders when providing solutions in or out-of-game.

• *Continuous improvement* makes apparent the adoption of developed processes by leaders for continuous improvement of all involved.

• *Culture of problem solving* narrates an instance where the culture of problem solving was scaffolded by debriefing situations, events, strategy talk, focusing on iteration rather than failure.

• *Recommends strategies* states where informant provided a strategic and/or tactical recommendation for discussion.

• *Solutions on follower abilities* elucidates the importance of leaders to evaluate followers’ skills and abilities for success in- and out-of-game.

*Nurturing Others or Individualized consideration* transmits the importance of leaders to create supporting environments that enable followers to articulate needs and concerns. The following sub-headings correspond to the italicized leadership sub-characteristic:

• *Considering the situation* reports an instance where the leader took into consideration the followers personal situation In-game and/or at the workplace.
● *Connecting individual values* recounts an instance when the leader connected the values of the individual to the values of the group.

● *Nurturing followers* provides an example when the leader provided an opportunity for personal or professional growth, developing skills and abilities of followers.

● *Followers needs* describes an instance when the informant was reflective and thoughtful to the needs of followers.

Each sub-heading includes a brief description and quoted self-described action or actions relayed by the informant, relevant to the corresponding sub-characteristic and context of leadership. In the event there were no examples of described by the informant during the in- and out-of-game interviews, every effort was made to explain the relevant contexts that may have contributed to the absence of a leadership characteristic. For example, guild leaders whose primary focus was recruiting may not articulate any examples pertaining to individualized consideration (aka nurturing others), because they may have a long list of players on a waiting list ready to take over the position of a departing player.

Labeled only by the informant’s alphanumeric identifier, The Guild Forum/Website provided an evaluation of In-game community resources available to members within the guild. Utilizing the rubric described in the previous section titled, “Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics” this component of the informant profile describes the complex role, activities and expectations of the In-game community upon its members. Within the framework of the four main leadership characteristics, community artifacts, resources and discussions provide the scaffolding necessary for the informant to experience In-game context and access to resources in support of complex resources. Described in Chapter Two, Idealized influence denotes leadership that provides a
model of high standards and or ethical conduct. As applied to the guild website, evidence that displays this attributed may be in the form of a list of rules, a vision statement, or policies pertaining to conduct or behavior. Inspirational Motivation in this case would describe some aspect of the website that may communicate high expectations encouraging participation in guild events or activities. Examples of Inspiration Motivation may include videos of encounters, a leader board or signup list. Intellectual Stimulation has a focus on innovation, transparency and insightful collaboration. Examples of Intellectual Stimulation may include Theorycrafting, tactical/strategic discussion and data sheets. The final characteristic is Individualized Consideration, which is characterized by a supportive environment, and leadership considers the needs of guild members.

The Survey, was the report of the informant’s completion of the online Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and a representation of the informant’s perceived transformational leadership characteristics defined as Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. The results of the survey were provide by the online service which include a quantitative representation of the four leadership characteristics frequency from 0 to 4 (0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Frequently, if not always) and a list by order of strongest characteristic, top to bottom.

The final component of the informant profile was titled, “Leadership Relationships Among Interview, Website and Survey”. Combining all three elements interviews, website and survey, we can form an understanding of the lived experience of leaders in- and out-of-game and the leadership characteristics that appear in both settings. At the core of this experience was the individual’s projected identity, which is the idealized perception of oneself that governs actions in- and out-of-game. External forces such as community, mentors and conflict can
shape this identity. As leaders we have four characteristics (Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration), which can increase or decrease in frequency based on the saliency of the experiences. These four characteristics can manifest themselves in- and out-of-game based on similar contexts found in either environment, the stronger the context the stronger the similarity. A synthesis of in- and out-of-game interviews, the guild forum/website and results of the online survey, it provided and understanding of the lived experiences of leaders in- and out-of-game and described transformational leadership characteristics of informants. This component provides insight on the informant’s self-perception, the community that scaffolds her leadership and the experiences that manifest themselves across similar contexts in- and out-of-game.

Analytical techniques. With the creation of a consistent format, informant data was analyzed individually, across participants and a side-by-side comparison of contrasting informants. The analysis of lived in- and out-of-game experiences were encapsulated in the informant profiles, consisting of all gathered data was be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated from interviews, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) result and guild information. Within the framework of transformational leadership sub-characteristics, each profile was closely scrutinized for examples of in- and out-of-game experiences and contexts. These examples were compared to the informant’s perceived Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results detailing their strongest transformational leadership characteristics, taking into account in- and out-of-game contexts. Contributing to the analysis of the data was the influence of the tools, resources and discussions of the online community, via the guild forum/website. The next level of analysis included a review of all informant profiles and common themes in- and out-of-game leader experiences. Much like the development of the informant profile,
further analysis of guild forums/websites and the MLQ were re-examined for lived leadership experiences and their contexts. The final analysis will examine a side-by-side comparison of leaders with contrasting guild philosophies (i.e. Social vs. Hardcore), perception of leadership style and In-game support.

**Synthesis and triangulation.** Using the transformational leadership characteristics as a common framework, all data was synthesized for lived in- and out-of-game experiences and compared for convergence at the level of conclusion and interpretation, triangulation (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). Data results, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research have been written in the subsequent chapters of this study.

At the core of the data results were four main Transformational Leadership characteristics and their 20 sub-characteristics. It was upon this foundation that rubrics for the in- and out-of-game interviews and guild forum/website were developed to provide a common framework to understanding the context of complex relationships leaders had with their followers and community. By connecting the data to the rubric an individual profile was created for each informant, consisting of demographic information, in- and out-of-game interviews, guild forum/website evaluation, the results of the MLQ and a summary of the informant’s in- and out-of-game leadership from synthesized data. A review of the results also included the formation of conclusions, implications and recommendations, by studying, synthesizing all informants and guilds that have contrasting In-game philosophies.

**Summary**

Seeking the answers to our three research questions, chapter three defined the step-by-step process to discovering the lived experiences of leaders with teams in- and out-of-game and characteristics that appear in both settings. The five steps in the research design for this study
included the development of a rubric for potential MMOs, selection of key informants, identification of methods, procedures for data collection and analysis of gathered evidence.

To understand the compelling relationships of leaders in- and out-of-game, a Leadership sandbox rubric for MMOs was created to identify and describe how guild websites, leader interviews and a self perceived leadership style provided greater insight to MMOs as a sandbox for leadership.

With the target number of key informants as six, in- and out-of-game criteria for leader participants were identified, taking into account their role in the community, knowledge, willingness, communicability and impartiality of the subject matter. The institution’s standards and processes for research were also incorporated into every aspect of the study, ensuring the ethical conduct of the researcher and safeguarding of information.

Utilizing a mixed method approach, the instrumentation developed a two-phase approach. The first phase included two interviews performed separately and designed to gather qualitative data on the informant’s lived leadership experiences in- and out-of-game. Informants described their role, activities and aspects of their leadership they call upon in either environment, in or out-of-game. The second phase was the use of an industry standard online evaluation for leaders called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. This online service delivered the questionnaire, tabulated the results and provided all the information to the researcher.

The collection of data from each participant was completed in a very systematic fashion, contacting the informants, scheduling and completing interviews, completing the questionnaire and reviewing the guild website. Informants meet the minimum criteria for participation were contacted via email, provided the required paperwork for participation and scheduled the time
for interviews. Upon completion of the interviews, the MLQ was sent via email and the informant’s guild forum/website was evaluated for transformational leadership sub-characteristics.

The final component of the research design lay in the analysis of the data gathered. Using the four transformational leadership characteristics as a starting point, a rubric was created to capture the emergent themes from the transcribed in- and out-of-game interviews, called Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics. Applied both interviews and the evaluation of the guild websites, the rubric provided the framework that connected the data to the research questions; created a template displaying the complex relationships between leaders and followers; and allow for the analysis of the lived in- and out-of-game experiences.
Chapter 4. The Results

As described in the initial pages of this study, games can provide us with an introduction to how we perceive environment and ourselves. Scaffolded by our communities, we form relationships through lived experiences that shape our lives as leaders in- and out-of-games. This chapter will act as the container for the qualitative and quantitative leadership data gathered as part of the research design described in Chapter 3. Framed by the four main transformational leadership characteristics of Idealized Influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, the gathered data provides an understanding of how Massively Multiplayer Online Games can be used as a sandbox for leadership. Against the backdrop of the research questions, the emerging themes and patterns will help us understand the lived experiences of leaders in- and out-of-game and to see if any characteristics of leadership development experiences appear in both settings. All results and findings are divided into three main sections Six Cases of Leadership, A Review of the Research Questions and a Summary of Findings.

Six Cases of Leadership

The range and variations of in- and out-of-game experiences for informants are complex. This section has gathered and categorized the complexity of six cases of leadership experiences into informant profiles to understand the dynamics between leaders and their followers. Each profile will contain the gathered in- and out-of-game interviews, guild evaluations and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaires (MLQs). Within the framework of transformational leadership characteristics, each profile will provide an in depth look at informant experiences, which was synthesized and analyzed for emerging patterns and themes of leadership. To create consistency and provide an opportunity to identify patterns and themes
between informants, each sub characteristic is described regardless of available information. In this case, the consistent absence of information can be as important as the presence of available data. Totaling six informants, the profiles are labeled with the informant’s out-of-game workplace titles and serve to capture the specific leadership characteristics and context of their experience. As described in the previous chapter, the “In-game Leadership” section contains experiences between guild leaders and their followers. In contrast, the “Out of Game Leadership” section consists of examples originating from the informant’s workplace environment. In the cases where examples spanned both sections, every effort was made to identify and categorize informant descriptions within the appropriate context and framework of transformational leadership. Sharing unique leadership qualities that shape by in- and out-of-game experiences, the informants consist of a restaurateur, academic leader, technology professional, computer programmer, researcher and software strategist.

**Informant Profile: The Restaurateur/Part Time Faculty**

Informant 1F, a self-identified leader in- and out-of-game, she is a former restaurateur, current part-time faculty member/graduate student for an educational institution and a World of Warcraft (WoW) guild officer for the 1FGFW (1F Guild Forum/Website). A female in her mid thirties, she described her technical abilities as proficient, and an everyday user of the Internet and social media. She plays 11-20+ hours In-game play and described her frequency as several times per week. Her In-game avatar is a male, druid, and Troll. She has played WoW for approximately 5.5 years and her main character for 4 years. She has self-identified her avatar as a female, goblin in the Shaman class. A former restaurateur with a part-time faculty position at she is working on a number of projects including a dissertation. A veteran in World of Warcraft, she has “been a guild leader and officer in two guild and lead strategist in (her current guild) and a co-strategist in a previous guild.” Her knowledge of in-game in formulation of
collaborative strategies and selection of guild membership provide insight on the development and activities of successful In-game raid teams. Her decision-making and ethical processes with peers, students and employees play an important part of her role as a leader in- and out-of-game. Within the framework of the four Transformational Leadership characteristics, the following sections will provide a detailed account of Informant 1F’s leadership experiences in- and out-of-game, community dialog found their public guild website and results of their leadership survey.

**In-game leadership.** During the In-game interview, informant 1F described a high number of instances in the characteristics pertaining to Idealized Influence, Intellectual stimulation and some individualized consideration. Leaders who exhibit strength in the category of Idealized Influence are strong role models who conduct themselves and make decisions based on processes with a foundation of moral or ethical standards. Intellectual Stimulation characterizes leaders who are innovative, collaborative and utilize data to solve problems. Leaders who exhibit Individualized consideration are supportive of their followers needs. These leaders embody the standards of the guild, employ some aspect of theorycrafting and considerate of followers needs. The remaining characteristic, inspirational motivation will also be included to better understand the context of in- and out-of-game leadership. Within the context of In-game play and interaction with guild members, the following sections will describe 1F’s experiences, framed by Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** Within the context of the management of rewards and leader interaction with guild members, Informant 1F described a high number of leadership attributes consistent with all five sub-characteristics described as Visible Leadership, Setting the Example, Decision Making, Representing the Group, and Leader’s Expectations.
Visible leadership. This characteristic depicts leaders who are present to their followers and groups outside of their immediate community. Informant 1F described nine instances relevant to sub-category Visible leadership. Of the instances pertaining to In-game visibility, they were around member conflict pertaining to the expulsion of team members. 1F described her role as a leader to address drama or conflict in the following way, “I was an officer in a casual 25 man guild… with [name removed], which meant that me and four other people got to deal with all the drama.” In her role, she would stand up and act as an advocate for players on their way out of the guild, acting on their behalf, “I respect that I was out voted, but I wasn’t going to fire someone over something I didn’t believe in.” Although her actions did not prevent the final outcome, her presence and words represented a guild member against the authority of the leadership.

Setting the example. This sub-characteristic portrays to followers an image of an ideal leader for a group. A leader who exhibits this characteristic leads by example and has high moral and ethical standards for conduct. Faced with the ethical dilemma of accepting a mentally unstable individual to satisfy her egalitarian disposition, she choose to put the needs of the guild ahead of her own, “I felt like I failed the individual who I didn’t allow into the guild, bit I don’t feel I failed the guild as a whole.” Setting the Example, for her fellow leaders and guild members, her actions established the importance of the community above the needs of the individual.

Decision making. This sub-characteristic describes leaders who make decisions based on a set of ethical or moral standards adopted by followers. When it entails the acceptance or expulsion of an individual from a guild, the importance of principled dialog based on well-defined policies and principles of the guild cannot be overstated. Reported to the researcher
nine times, 1F explained a difficult decision pertaining to the acceptance of a new guild applicant with a psychological disability. Defending her position to accept the new applicant with her peers, she later acquiesced because the guild did not have the resources and training to support new applicants with a disability. “It isn’t my role to go out there and save people and I was worried about the team and individuals I’ve had a long term investment on.” 1F’s decision to vote against the new applicant indicates the importance she emphasizes on the success of her team and her guild. However, I have no doubt that if resources were readily available to this guild member 1F would have continued to fight for the acceptance of the application. Guided by this same principle, she also describes an out-of-game example where she decided to involve counselors and security professionals to ensure the well being of her classroom or group. This scenario is explained further in the out-of-game section for informant 1F.

Representing the group. It describes 1F’s participation and interaction with members outside of her leadership group. In this example, she represented her leadership group as the leader who was responsible for expelling guild members. She describes her role in the following way, “I mainly did the firing of the players that weren’t up to snuff.” As the representative of the leadership group and known to perform the unpleasant task of firing people, her actions or presence can impact the perceptions or generate reflection of an individual or group’s In-game performance or conformity to social norms established by guild leadership.

Leader’s expectations. Informant 1F described 10 instances relevant to sub-category leader’s expectations, which illustrates the ability to clearly define the follower’s role towards a common goal or mission. As the leader with the task of firing guild members, she has a vested interest in selecting players to fill a goal or purpose. “We had a very particular player in mind
and we were a very successful guild and we were very choosy about the folks who got in.”

Through the recruitment process leaders are able to set the expectations of prospective members, through an honest assessment of their skills and abilities. The expectations through honest assessments were not just limited to her In-game environment, but also extended into her out-of-game classroom and experience as a restaurateur, described in the next section of her out-of-game environment. The communication of a leader’s expectations to followers starts from the beginning of the recruitment process; and later scaffolded by policies and social norms of guild leadership.

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** Of the three Transformational leadership characteristics, informant 1F did not describe significant numbers of In-game instances where she inspired or persuaded others to participate, as defined in the sub-categories below. Given her role in the guild is primarily boss strategy, member conflict and the firing of guild members, other guild members may have been tasked to help motivate its membership in other ways. Although the sub-categories did not rank as high, they do merit consideration when evaluated against additional data further in this paper.

**Alternative solutions.** In the context of her in of game guild activities, 1F did not describe any examples where she persuaded followers into viewing alternatives based on their actions.

**Encouraging participation.** In the context of her in of game guild activities, 1F did not describe any examples where she encouraged or inspired participation in guild or raid related activities.

**Connecting group values.** With In-game success as a core value of the guild, informant 1F described how the actions of one, may affect the many. As a guild leader, the needs of the
guild are paramount over the needs of the individual, especially when it stands in the way of the
guild’s core value. In the In-game interview she describes this very difficult choice to exclude
one to benefit the many, by taking into account “how this individual’s long/short term stability
might affect 24 other people.” Any perceived or real misalignment of values of individuals can
potentially jeopardize ones standing or membership in the community.

Communicate performance. Communication and feedback of an instance where a
follower violates a social norm or performed poorly in a raid is an important part of their
development within a guild. “I’ve had to fire individuals and sometimes you want to give them
warning. Sometimes you can give a warning and sometimes you want to see improvement and
sometimes there’s just inexcusable behavior. I’ve fired individuals for inexcusable behavior.
I’ve also tried to work with people whether in a restaurant, in a classroom or in the guild.
That’s the power of good critique.” By providing good critique, new guild members can
become better acclimated to the guild’s culture and veterans can improve on their in battle
performances.

Insight through reflection. 1F described how she works to reach out and provide
positive critiques that hopefully provide opportunities for them to reflect and improve. In one
instance she describes how a former guild member had developed under her direction and
because of her work with her, is considered one of the best players in the game. She describes
her experience in this way, “We have to take these moments and have to learn from them and
we have to hope that the players we play with do to… the (guild members) players that play
under us.” The reflection was not only beneficial to the follower, but provided an opportunity
for 1F’s efforts to creating an atmosphere, which contributed to a follower’s success.
Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). Informant 1F verbalized a high number of instances where she worked with her In-game community to problem solve using data and innovative strategies to overcome In-game challenges. In her role as chief strategist for her guild, one would expect a high number of described instances in this transformational leadership characteristic. Although the instances described were not equal to those in the first section, the sub-characteristic of continuous improvement, showed the same number of examples found in- and out-of-game.

Transparency. In the context of her In-game recruitment activities, all guild leaders knew of her desire to include a guild applicant with the disability. However, after realizing that the guild did not have the resources to meet the needs of the applicant, she agreed to not allow the applicant into the guild. “We weren’t emotionally equipped or professional equipped to handle this individual and I had to think about 24 other people in a team”

Data driven solutions. As the In-game strategist of her guild, she gathers research on the next In-game battle and formulates a strategic solution based on background information available on the Internet. Also during the encounter, and after a series of wipes (all In-game avatars die), she provide additional information in the following way, “I’m really good a strategies. If we're struggling, that’s when I speak up and say… I think were struggling because of these things.” Utilizing the data provided in their encounters, they are able to successfully overcome and In-game challenge.

Continuous improvement. Always striving to do better, she “stuck around and I proved myself competent enough to where the other officer knew” that she was dependable and could get the job done for her guild. Consistency of dependability In-game and showing she can
problem solve any issue for the guild are the hallmarks of 1F. A self-described type A personality, she is focused in improving herself and her team, in or out-of-game.

*Culture of problem solving.* Leaders communicating with other leaders are how 1F helped create a culture of problem solving within her guild. By forming relationships with fellow leaders, they are able to exchange informal comments not found in a formal online space. “So one of the things we had (officers) was to use private in bind (text based communication) to speak about strategies and sometimes things were so idiotic that there was nothing to say but “What the F**ck!” In this example, officers not only exchange strategic problem solving strategies, but are comfortable enough to communicate in a way acceptable only within their peer group.

*Recommends strategies.* Even as she was coming up through the ranks, she started to make In-game strategy recommendations for guild objectives. “I would suggest a new strategy to the group and at times find myself speaking out.” Working with her fellow leaders she proved herself as a strategist to her peers and became the primary strategist for the guild.

*Solutions on follower abilities.* When formulating a solution, leaders who exhibit this sub-characteristic take into account the skills and abilities of their followers. Always a researcher and problem solver, she describes herself as one who “enjoys running over content. When I think of my strengths, I excel in things like player conflict.” Its this combination of player knowledge and In-game strategy that lead to a successful raiding team.

*Nurturing others (individualized consideration).* Although her role in the guild was one that researches content and strategy for the next boss fight, 1F created a nurturing environment where she nurtured others while providing good critique for players. Informant 1F described the same number of instances for sub-characteristics titled *Considering the Situation*
and *Connecting individual values*. Given her work mentoring guild members, it is understandable that she would provide examples that would nurture fellow guild members.

**Considering the situation.** Always considerate of her follower’s situation, 1F provides the defense for guild members who may be identified by the leadership for expulsion. With this sub-characteristic, the leader takes into consideration a number of external factors (which may affect the guild member’s performance) when making team decisions. “One time I just didn’t believe that one of the players needed to be let go and I refused to fire her.” Taking into consideration a factor important to 1F, her refusal to fire the guild member required another guild officer to complete the task.

**Connecting individual values.** 1F works with followers to provide feedback on In-game performance to connect their values to the success of the group. By providing this feedback to raid members, 1F can help align their personal goals to that of the group. “If we do critique, it’s to help my fellow players.” Ensuring that the individual’s values are aligned with the guild/raid helps to ensure that followers are supported by their in-game community.

**Nurturing followers.** For 1F creating a supportive environment is a standard she places in her out-of-game environment with complete strangers known as a PUG (Pick Up Group). “I’m raid leading a pickup group, a PUG of like a bunch of people that have never met and I need to find out each member’s individual strengths and pull them together and make them a team as my classroom strategy.” Through the efforts of 1F, complete strangers can begin to have a dialog and have an opportunity to support each other during In-game battles. In the last half of her statement, she begins to talk about how she creates a similar environment in her out-of-game classroom.
Followers needs. Upon reading the application of a potential member with a disability, 1F was thoughtful and reflective of the needs of both the guild and potential follower. “I respect that as an individual, that she as up front and she made no excuses for it but that there was something about that.” Sensitive to diversity and willing to champion a potential candidate with a disability she advocated for the potential candidate during the selection process and with fellow leaders.

Out-of-game leadership. As a former restaurateur and current leader in the classroom, 1F’s leadership role and environment has changed. Continuing to use the Opportunities for Transformational Leadership rubric for in- and out-of-game, informant 1F’s description of leadership sub characteristics remained relatively consistent across all criteria and above the frequency threshold. Since there were not any significant increases in descriptions for one particular characteristic as seen in the previous In-game interview; the frequency and consistency implies that 1F’s out-of-game roles allows her to be more of a transformational leader. This next section illustrates 1F’s out-of-game leadership experiences within the framework of Transformational Leadership’s four characteristics, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

Charisma (idealized influence). The out-of-game contexts of the three leadership sub-characteristics described by 1F include interactions with students, and workplace community. Of all five sub-characteristics, four were described with the relative frequency identified by the informant’s Visible Leadership, Setting the Example, Decision Making and Leader’s expectations.

Visible leadership. Sub-characteristic Visible Leadership continues to play an important role in 1F’s professional success as a leader. In her former role as restaurateur, she described
how her presence improved the effectiveness of her team and standing to upper management, “I was good at making sure everything got done and gradually, I started to take over the day manager position.” Seen as someone who gets things done by her peers and administration, she scheduled meetings to resolve employee conflict and improve the atmosphere at her workplace.

*Setting the example.* As one who sets the standards for specific behaviors accepted as a social norm within a group, 1F brought to her workplace the drive to get things done and ability to work with a diverse group of people. “I’m a type A personality, diligent, and I do have skill in navigating different personalities.” It is through this navigation of personalities, that 1F is able to build relationships that enable her to connect with her peers. Its through this connection that followers will begin to emulate her drive and diligence, with her example.

*Decision making.* Ethical and moral standards play an important role in the decisions made by informant 1F in either in or out-of-game. Referring back to 1F’s In-game interview, she equated the safety of her classroom to the success of her guild. At times facing conflict with external forces, her values and standards direct her out-of-game actions around the the safety of her students. “I’m a leader of a classroom but I’m not capable of dealing with each of my students emotional and mental problems, I’m not qualified for that… that’s what counselors are for. I send my students if they come to me and they need help from someone who is professionally trained for it.” When confronted with the possibility of the group being put in danger, her decision to safeguard the wellbeing of her students or team takes precedence over what happens in the classroom.

*Representing the group.* It was described by informant 1F when she represented her peers in the removal of a tenured faculty member at her institution. “We lead an inquisition to have her fired. It was a process because she was well established in her field and nobody
expected the “[name] Inquisition”. As the leader of the “Inquisition” she coordinated the groups activities and once the faculty member had been removed, her name became synonymous with the powerful event, making it difficult for her to be associated with anything positive outside of the event, which made her legendary. Much like her In-game representation, once she was associated or branded to have a role specific to the community, it becomes a challenge to move beyond the event or role you were once associated.

**Leader’s expectations.** Teamwork plays a large role in 1F’s expectations with her employees in a restaurant. She takes the time to select her teammates, looking for skills and attributes that are conducive to the development of a team. Even when she is out-of-game she references the similarities of her In-game expectations, “teamwork, coming together and helping one another. That’s what a good raid group does, in my own personal raid philosophy and that’s also what a good restaurant does.” By developing relationships with her team and aligning the strengths of her team to specific task, she communicates directly and indirectly her importance of teamwork and the team.

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** Compared to her leadership role in game, 1F described a greater number of instances where she persuaded followers to engage in out-of-game activities at her workplace. Her out-of-game roles did not require her to share leadership within a team, as is commonly found in a guild. Therefore the variety and frequency of her described experiences are greater than that of her In-game leadership in this characteristic.

**Alternative solutions.** Actively seeking the removal of a tenured faculty member, informant 1F provided an alternative solution to her peers and others by providing a petition, instead of waiting for the individual to retire. “Getting people to sign anything, to have her removed is a big deal and huge effort.” The petition provided a justification and a list of
grievances to be taking to college administration. Providing a solution to the presence of an abusive faculty member.

Encouraging participation. As a part-time faculty member and always looking for ways to improve her classes, she is always looking to create engagement in her classroom. Ranging from the evaluation of classic literature to the completion of worksheets, she is aware that there will be times when her efforts, regardless how great may not be enough. “No matter what I did, I just couldn’t seem to motivate them or make them excited (in the classroom).” Although she has successfully encouraged her students to participate in classroom activities, followers must also be willing to take an active role in their out-of-game learning or In-game challenge.

Connecting group values. The safety and personal improvement development are values she works to instill in her restaurant employees. In one example she describes how an employee was using a knife improperly, “I want to work with my employees and say “It’s Okay.” I’ve done basic knife skills. How are you holding that chef’s knife? Let’s work on that.” Through her interaction with the employee, her leadership illustrated the group values of safety and improvement to the individual.

Communicate performance. 1F provided an example where she reached out to followers to obtain feedback on a future event that would build a sense of community. After receiving feedback she, “coordinated a number of different activities across different classrooms, like public speakers to give students a valuable learning experience and a sense of community.” Through her leadership, there was greater participation across the institution and the event was a success.
Insight through reflection. Building upon 1F’s In-game comments, she shared how providing ‘good critique’ to individuals in the workplace, provides a source of inspiration and motivation to followers. By communicating her high expectations, even after the end of their workplace relationship, she can reconnect to emphasize high standards and reenergize followers. She describes the positive effect of their interaction in this way, “It’s the same for former life as a restaurateur and now with my former students. I like to see where they’ve gone since we parted ways. Part of leadership is failure and part of leadership is very much in the moment. But a big part of it is just that reconnecting after a while and seeing what happens when that relationship has ended.”

Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). Out-of-game problem solving for 1F is within the context of her contributions in the classroom and leading a faculty peer group in projects with college administration. The sub-characteristics of this area are noted for their transparency, data driven solutions, continuous improvement, culture of problem solving, recommends strategies, and solutions on follower abilities. Although the number of out-of-game descriptions were not significantly higher, it is important to understand the out-of-game context that play a role in the relationship between leader and follower.

Transparency. In an effort to build community, 1F communicated with leaders and students alike to begin a dialog that would define their English department, “What is a degree in English and what does it mean?” Through this transparent exchange of ideas, her out-of-game department was able to formalize and conceptualize where they want to go as a department and started to create a community.

Data driven solutions. Working with her writing students, she presents solutions that allow them to focus on one or two problem areas. Once they’ve attained mastery in those areas,
1F revisits their work and provide them with addition examples to improve their writing. “I ask them to focus on one thing. “Let’s focus on this aspect of your paper and let’s get that nailed down.” It is through this constant review of their work that they begin to improve.

*Continuous improvement.* As a restaurateur her mark as a leader is very similar to her in- and out-of-game desire to improve herself and her team. She describes herself as a “dutiful person and I was the person to make sure that things the needed cleaning got cleaned.” Besides her dependability, her administration recognized her desire to continuously improve herself, her team and relationships.

*Culture of problem solving.* The out-of-game example provided by 1F is a classroom activity. It is described by her in the following way, “I firmly believe that my classroom of 20 people teaching introduction to literature is a team activity. Ultimately we need to work together to have a conversation to get the ball rolling, to make connections and take them into the outside world.” Creating this culture of problem solving in her classroom students from relationships, solve problems, and connect the classroom subject matter to their day-to-day activities.

*Recommends strategies.* A member of the English department at her institution, she was tasked with finding a way to build community. To do so, she presented a strategy to the departments in the following way, “Well, we want students to be familiar with terms, periods and determine, “What is a degree in English and what does it mean?” In presenting this strategy, her out-of-game community collaborated on a number of ideas, which made the English department event a success.

*Solutions on follower abilities.* As a restaurateur, 1F leverages their knowledge of employee’s skills and abilities to provide excellent customer service. She combines her
experience in the restaurant industry and her leadership in a guild in the following way, “In my experience in the restaurant business, running a guild is like putting together an efficient kitchen staff. In as much as you need to have a tank, a healer and DPS… in a restaurant, you need people who excel in different areas and can come together as a team to produce a great finished product in a particular amount of time that will make the customer happy. It’s kind of like killing a boss except you’re feeding them.” According to 1F, matching the skills and abilities of followers to formulate a solution is a key attribute to success, in- and out-of-game.

*Nurturing others (individualized consideration).* As a restaurateur and leader in the classroom, 1F is free to nurture others not sharing leadership with another individual or group. As described in the In-game environment, two sub characteristics *Considering the Situation* and *Connecting Individual Values* were described as frequently in- and out-of-game. Restaurateur who builds teams and faculty member genuinely engaged in the development of her students, she sees many parallels between creating a nurturing and supportive environment in- and out-of-game.

*Considering the situation.* In either in or out-of-game, 1F is considerate of her follower’s personal situation, which may affect their performance in the workplace or classroom. “I’d like to find out what’s going on with them. I want to see if their have a down time because there are family issues, sickness or their distracted.” As a leader she understands the importance of the follower’s life outside of their in or out-of-game community, by creating a supportive environment.

*Connecting individual values.* In this out-of-game example informant 1F connects her out-of-game workplace, the classroom to an In-game context when describing how leaders must connect or realign an individual’s values to the values of their community. This example
explains how gamers and college students have some initial values or expectations, which IF learned to manage and prevent followers from losing their composure. “It can be hard for me to separate my in-game self with my out-of game self. Its awesome to enter into a game and see a different perspective and say this is not me and I’m trying to think of how I might respond if I were not me. But there is sort of a little core of how I end up dealing with things. I’ve learned a lot about dealing with conflict by learning how to deal with 25 gamers who are like, “I want epic loot! I want to kill a boss!” and “25 students who are like, OMG this is college and I’m freaking out!” There’s a lot of overlap in how I’ve learned to deal with individuals.”

_Nurturing followers._ Out-of-game IF creates a supportive environment in her classroom. “I’m not sure if I call upon my RL experiences to dictate my In-game experiences, but a lot of times I can and do make the analogy between my classroom experiences and my In-game experiences. I firmly believe that my classroom of 20 people-teaching introduction to literature is a team activity. Ultimately we need to work together to have a conversation to get the ball rolling, to make connections and take them into the outside world.” Through those conversations, students are provided an opportunity to explore and be exposed to new experiences in a safe setting.

_Followers needs._ Working as a leader in a departmental project, she worked to create an event whose themes and ideas are based on the needs of her community. “We talked about having students receive a specific experience from classes as a student/scholar in English, with different themes and ideas.” Reflective and thoughtful to the needs of her community, she created an atmosphere that was supportive and nurturing.
The guild forum/website: the 1FGFW. Utilizing the Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics from Chapter 3, this section will explore and evaluate informant 1F’s guild website for the four transformational leadership characteristics Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. Although there are three areas on the website that were not available to the public, “The Itinerary”, “Raid Zone” and “Gallery”, a considerable amount of evidence can be gathered from the viewable pages. This section will provide a mixture of text and images from 1F’s website of guild events and activities within the framework of transformational leadership.

1FGFW: charisma. 1FGFW contained three sub-characteristic Setting the Example, Representing the Group and Leader’s expectations. Ranging from “Being respectful...” to requirements for creating guild teams, these 10 rules clearly define the desired behavior and social norms of guild members. Displayed are the rules from the website.
Figure 5. 1FGFW guild rules the “10 Easy Ones”

The second sub-characteristic pertains to the representation of the guild during game play while interacting with players outside of the guild. These rules define the difference between a personal invitation and recruitment of individuals. Inclusion into a guild is a very social process. With the potential of new members not conforming to the guild’s social norms or engaging current members in a friendly way, 1FGFW has clearly defined the process introducing new members into this very social community.

Figure 6. 1FGFW good guild Information, personal invitations vs. recruitment
The third sub-characteristic under Charisma describes how 1FGFW provides to followers a clear expectation of their role within the guild. Defining the specific duties for each rank, the website provides a list of behaviors to becoming a leader. These rules not only provide guidelines for future leaders, but also serve as a reminder to existing leadership.

![Becoming a Leader](image)

*Figure 7. 1FGFW guild expectations on becoming a leader.*

**1FGFW: inspiring others.** The 1FGFW website provided examples that encouraged participation and connected values of the group to values of the individual. Within the sub-characteristic defined as *Encouraging Participation*, the 1FGFW forum encourages participation in- and out-of-game related discussions. Although the number of replies are at 0, there are a modest number of views to each announcement, with discussions occurring in the more private forums, inaccessible to the researcher.

![Guild Forum](image)

*Figure 8. 1FGFW guild forum displaying participation and topics*
The second example described as Connecting Group Values to those of the individual include an opportunity to win a World of Warcraft mount. By offering an incentive, the guild can encourage participation in guild activities, which would bolster In-game community and provide one lucky participant an opportunity to obtain an In-game reward.

![Image of a World of Warcraft mount as an incentive]

**Figure 9.** 1FGFW raid mounts as an incentive for participation

*1FGFW: collaborating towards a solution.* There are three examples that offer followers continuous improvement, culture of problem solving and Recommends strategies.

The first example from the website displays tools used to improve In-game skills and abilities available to leaders and members.
The tools such as “Ask Mr. Robot” review an avatar’s equipment for the sole purpose of maximizing In-game effectiveness during PvP (Player vs. Player) or PvE (Player vs. Environment) engagements in the World of Warcraft. As displayed below a great deal of data can be gleaned from these tools to maximize game play.

Also evident from the 1FGFW website is a culture of problem solving, which includes problem solving and strategic talk. In the example below some “homework” was assigned by the guild master to ensure that her players were prepared for the In-game challenge they expect.
to meet as well as the lore behind each boss. Preparations can range from pre-battle briefings to adjustments to gear. An understanding of the lore engages the player by increasing in their immersion in game.

Figure 12. 1FGFW members are given homework by guild leadership

A variety of strategic recommendations are available from players, leaders and sources found on the Internet. These resources are truly worth mentioning because they provide a starting point from which a team can identify what role each member plays during the In-game battle and begin a dialog that strengthens relationships and commitment to their In-game community.

Figure 13. 1FGFW guild members review and engage in strategic recommendations
**1FGFW: nurturing others.** Of the four sub-characteristics in this category the 1FGFW website contained an example of *considering the situation*, consisting of a “Happy Birthday” message to one of its guild members. The message takes into consideration the personal situation and identification of membership in the guild.

![Image](78x463 to 239x610)

*Figure 14. 1FGFW connecting with guild mates beyond the game, "Happy Birthday"

**The survey: informant 1F.** As described in Chapter 3 of Phase II, Questionnaire informant 1F complete an online survey of their perceived transformational leadership style, measuring the four traits of Idealized Influence or Charisma (IN), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). A faculty member with a high Idealized Influence would demonstrate principled decision making processes based on high moral/ethical standards and act as an example to peers and students. Faculty with a high Inspirational Motivation has the ability to persuade peers and students to consider alternative solutions and encourage continued participation in classroom or group activities. A high Intellectual Stimulation indicates faculty who are largely innovative, collaborative and data driven. Leaders in education with a high Individual Consideration create supportive and nurturing environments mindful of the needs of followers. The online survey closely measures these four characteristics. Called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the survey consists of 43 questions using a 5 point frequency Likert scale (0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a
while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Frequently, if not always). Once completed the results are tabulated and sent to the researcher for evaluation. Displayed below is the result of informant 1F’s MLQ survey.

Table 6.

*Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Data: Informant 1F*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Idealized Influence (IN)</th>
<th>Inspirational Motivation (IM)</th>
<th>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</th>
<th>Individual Consideration (IC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1F</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information indicates informant 1F perceives herself as a leader with the following traits (in order of frequency):

- Idealized Influence (most frequent)
- Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individual Consideration
  (Rated Equally)

**Leadership relationships among interview, website and survey.** Combining 1F’s interview, website and leadership survey, we see an interplay between her in- and out-of-game leadership roles, as guild officer and academic faculty leader/former restaurateur. To understanding the lived leadership experience in- and out-of-games, we must understand how informant 1F perceives herself, her communities scaffolds perceptions as a leader and the manifestation transformational leadership experiences of themselves across similar contexts in an out-of-game.

A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was taken by informant 1F and assessed her as one who Nurtures Others (Individualized Consideration). As described in the previous section (The survey: informant 1F), 1F received scores ranking Idealized Influence with the highest frequency. Coincidentally, the remaining three characteristics scored equally between
each other Individualized Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, and Inspirational Motivation. It certainly corresponds to her out-of-game role as leader in the classroom, informant 1F perceives herself as leader who creates a nurturing environment, continues to be sensitive to the needs of followers, has a focus on creativity, and encourages insightful collaboration.

The guild can act as a platform to scaffold the needs of its members and leadership. Earlier in this section titled “Guild Forum/Website:1FGFW”, 1F’s guild websites displayed transformational leadership resources in support of its community. A written representation of idealized influence, the “10 rules”, “Good Guild Information” and ”Becoming a Leader” clearly state the standards expectations of leader and follower. Two areas designed to encourage guild participation were noted as evidence of Inspirational Motivation. The open guild forums area displayed holiday, game and strategic information available for anyone to view. Located at the center of the webpage was an advertisement encouraging everyone to participate in a guild activity, which could provide you with a valuable In-game reward. Three examples of guild members collaborating towards a solution (Intellectual Stimulation) offered tools that would provide continuous improvement to followers, create a culture of problem solving and allow followers and leaders alike the opportunity to recommend strategies during game play. The guild website also provided an opportunity for leaders to nurture its community by connecting to the individuals in or out-of-game birthday (Individualized Consideration). With the rich variety of resources available to leaders they can employ the four transformation characteristics to scaffold followers in any environment.

The well being of the group, as part of Decision Making sub-characteristic is a leadership experience that can be seen across similar contexts in- and out-of-game. In accordance with her moral standards, informant 1F described how she lobbied to encourage the
acceptance of a guild applicant who had willingly disclosed a psychological disability. However, after realizing the guild did not have the resources to support the needs of the applicant she withdrew her support to ensure the well being of the guild and her raid team. Out-of-game, informant 1F experienced a similar scenario, which required her to place the needs of her classroom and students ahead of her personal teaching processes. Not disrupting the learning processes of her classroom, she assisted a student who was struggling with a personal matter, which required the assistance of collect counselors and campus police. Her insistence to find a resolution to the individual student’s personal matter was to ensure the safety of her students and the institution. Within the framework of Transformational Leadership characteristics, the experience of safeguarding the needs of the group can illustrated in the following way:

- **Idealized Influence**: 1Fs strong moral compass guides her decision making processes opting for solutions that safeguard the needs of the group.
- **Individualized Consideration**: Considerate of followers needs and works to create a safe and nurturing environment that benefits the needs of all followers in- and out-of-game.

Informant 1F was described by the MLQ survey to have the strongest characteristics of idealized influence, which guides decisions to safeguard the needs of the group. Although her In-game role, as displayed above was one that enforces standards and nurtures followers, her peer leaders and resources in- and out-of-game provide the necessary scaffolding for the success of her followers. In the example identified, missing are in the characteristics of Inspirational Motivation and in Intellectual Stimulation. However, based on the evidence gathered from 1FGFW site, the community provides more than adequate in scaffolding of followers in these
two areas. A leader passionate about the needs of her in- and out-of-game community, she often find it difficult to separate relevant situations found in- and out-of-game.

**Informant Profile: The Faculty Department Chair**

Informant 1M, a self-identified leader in- and out-of-game, he is a faculty leader for an educational institution and a World of Warcraft (WoW) guild officer for the 1MGFW (1M Guild Forum/Website). A male in his mid thirties, he described his technical abilities as proficient, and an everyday user of the Internet and social media. He plays 11-20+ hours in-game play and described his frequency as several times per week. His in-game avatar is a male, druid, and Troll. He has played WoW for approximately 6.5 years and his main character for 5 years. He self-identified his avatar as one of the 125 best Druids in the World and considers his game play skills as proficient. A full time faculty member and discipline specific co-chair, his out-of-game duties include teaching 140 students per semester and coordinating discussions, activities and discipline specific projects amongst 45 faculty members. As co-raid leader, co-guild leader, and player class leader, his duties in-game range from recruiting, and player class leadership to raid membership support. His knowledge of player’s participation in past games (specifically with MMOs) can provide insight and patterns of developing or nurturing leadership behaviors and “diagnosing trouble” during raid events. His decision-making processes with peers and students play an important part of his role as a leader in and out of the classroom. Within the framework of the four Transformational Leadership characteristics, the following sections will provide a detailed account of Informant 1M’s leadership experiences in- and out-of-game, community dialog found their public guild website and results of their leadership survey.

**In-game leadership.** During the in-game interview, informant 1M described a high number of instances in the characteristics pertaining to Idealized Influence and Inspirational
Motivation. Leaders who exhibit strength in the category of Idealized Influence are strong role models who conduct themselves and make decisions based on processes with a foundation of moral or ethical standards. Inspirational motivation characterizes leaders who communicate and persuade with guild members into accomplishing a common in-game goal or objective. These leaders embody the standards of the guild and provide inspiration to their community during challenging in-game battles or member conflict. The remaining two characteristics, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration will also be included to better understand the context of in- and out-of-game leadership. Within the context of in-game play and interaction with guild members, the following sections will describe 1M’s experiences, framed by Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** Within the context of the management of rewards and leader interaction with guild members, Informant 1M described a high number of leadership attributes consistent with all five sub-characteristics of Idealized Influence or Charisma, specifically described as **Visible Leadership, Setting the Example, Decision Making, Representing the Group, and Leader’s Expectations.**

**Visible leadership.** It depicts leaders who are present to their followers and groups outside of their immediate community. Informant 1M described six instances relevant to the sub-category **Visible leadership.** Of the six instances pertaining to in-game visibility, four of the six were around “loot drama” or member conflict pertaining to the distribution of in-game rewards. In one example, 1M described his role as a leader to address any member complaints or issues in the following way, “As an officer, the members directed the angry player to me.” The informant describes how his presence was necessary to affect a resolution or initiate a dialog that conforms to the social norms and policies established by guild leadership. In-game,
1M became the representative of the guild and represent the ethical and moral standards of the group. His presence and words have the authority of guild leadership and the power to reward or punish its members.

Setting the example. This sub-characteristic portrays to followers an image of an ideal leader for a group. A leader who exhibits this characteristics leads by example and has high moral and ethical standards for conduct. Given 1M’s statement, “I think we ended up wiping that time, but it wasn’t because of him. He did it perfectly”, he sets an example for in-game leaders to scaffold new or struggling players. In this example, he identified a player who was struggling with an in-game challenge and found a step-by-step method allowing the player to become successful. He shared an in-game technique available to all players and coached a struggling player through a difficult challenge, conduct of a leader. Through his actions he established a standard of conduct for new players and a reminder to veteran members, which can set the tone and overall environment of play.

Decision making. This sub-characteristic describes leaders who make decisions based on a set of ethical or moral standards adopted by followers. The importance of a principled dialog between leader and followers cannot be overstated. Described to the researcher nine times, 1M explained how decisions and processes are governed by defined concepts enforced by leadership. 1M described an example where he was empowered by the guild’s leadership for expelling a member for the violation of social norms. He continued to relay the importance of decisions founded on moral and ethical standards out-of-game, specifically in his classroom environment. 1M stated having a “similar dance with students who want me to justify what grade they got in the classes that I teach at the college. It’s a lot easier with the students because I am so very explicit about grades. It’s such a big thing.” Guild leaders are faced with in-game
challenges that have far reaching effects on guild membership and the life of the guild, in this example the same holds true for similar contexts that put into question any violation of policies or social norms that could have you expelled from a guild or a college course.

Representing the group. This describes the leader’s participation and interaction with external members/groups outside of their guild. Through the leader’s interactions with external players, non-members form perceptions of what may be expected as part of the environment of game play or glean information regarding individual guild members. In the example provided by 1M, another guild contacted him for a reference on a former guild member. The external guild leader asked in the following way, “How is she?”… And I said, “She’s a really good hunter.” Then she whispered me again and said, “Yea… but what’s she like in the guild?” and I said, “She’s a really good hunter.” In this example, 1M represented the guild by communicating the standard level of game play proficiency of its guild membership as well the social norms found within the guild and with the former member. As a representative, 1M were mindful of his conduct. Any inappropriate behavior on the part of the leader can negatively impact the perceptions of individuals or groups outside of the guild affecting future partnerships or external opportunities for collaboration.

Leader’s expectations. It illustrates 1M’s ability to clearly define the follower’s role towards a common goal or mission. He described how a guild member continued to struggle with an in-game challenge. The team member struggled with the game mechanics and became uncertain of his role in defeating the “Goo Monster”. After a number of failed attempts, 1M provided step-by-step directions to the raid member, changing his role from understanding the in-game mechanics to “Press Two in 3,2,1”. Informant 1M further applied this in-game process of defining a follower’s role to his out-of-game experience with his students. He illustrates the
reframing of expectations to his students in the following way, “if you start writing you’re going to become a better writer just by doing it.” By reshaping the expectations of the follower and providing the appropriate scaffolding, the player and leader can achieve the desired outcome.

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** With the ability for players to move from one guild to another and personality conflicts, the communication of leaders to followers to take an active participation in guild related activities could be a challenge. 1M’s descriptions in this category were notable in Encouraging participation. Although the remaining three sub-categories did not rank as high, they do merit consideration when evaluated with data further in this paper.

**Alternative solutions.** Leaders often persuade followers into viewing alternatives based on their actions. 1M describe three in-game examples, which provide followers with essentially two options, conform or risk failure/expulsion. The first example provided was the followers perceived hypocrisy of guild leadership’s policy on “no loot drama.” The scenarios are as follows; a guild member was initially expelled for loot drama, but was later reinstated because of her in-game skills. If members found the actions of the guild leadership to be in appropriate, they were offered the options of acceptance/conformity or departure from the guild. The resulting fallout of the leadership’s decision was explained by 1M in the following way, “we ended up losing a couple people because of it… who never had any loot drama.” In this example the alternative had dire consequences, especially if the values of a significant number of followers were not align with the actions of the guild leadership. The second example involves persuading a guild member to conform to social norms or be expelled from the guild. As described by 1M, she had been “spoken to many times” and provided alternative means to conform based on expected behaviors of guild members. Since she was not able to participate
in creating a harmonious in-game environment; she was expelled from the guild. The third example persuaded the follower to abandon the general understanding of in-game battle play and accept the step-by-step directions of the raid leader. “He (the struggling player) has to realize that this is doable.” By providing the necessary scaffolding to the player, the leader was able to show an alternative solution to the failure experience during in-game battle.

*Encouraging participation.* This relays how guild leaders encourage participation through policies, colorful or purposeful dialog, and providing a taste for success. Pertaining to inspirational motivation, this sub-characteristic is an important aspect of 1M’s in-game leadership. To encourage participation in guild activities, 1M explains that his guild developed a loot distribution policy to encourage followers to focus on “beating the boss” and not a personal objective (i.e. obtaining loot). The distribution of in-game rewards is a very important topic and can be the cause of conflict within a guild. Therefore a well-defined loot distribution policy can encourage continued and future participation from its members. Two examples provided by 1M pertain to the sometimes-colorful dialog found in their in-game text chat or a free proprietary voice communication software called Ventrilo (“Vent”). Dialog such as, “Get your head out of your A$$ and put your raiding diaper on and do your jobs.” or “You know we need to stop taking as much animal font damage as we’re taking so don’t stand in animal font.” Essentially an in-game “pep talk”, raid leaders communicate to players in a variety of ways to encourage and motivate. However, there is no better motivation to encouraging participation than providing followers with a taste of success. 1M provides this opportunity to his followers by understanding the dynamics behind a battle and providing the step-by-step commands at specific time intervals to ensure his players are successful.
Connecting group values. This sub characteristic is defined as the sub-characteristic that “connects values of the group to the values of the individual”, informant 1M provided only one in-game example around a guild authored policy on loot distribution. According to 1M the “policy existed is so that people would focus on the objective of beating the boss and obtaining the team objective and not the personal objective.” Given this statement, the guild values the challenge of overcoming an in-game objective (the boss) and creating a sense of team amongst its members. The development of this policy ensures that the values of the individual are properly aligned with the overarching values of the guild.

Communicate performance. Leaders who display this sub-characteristic communicate “to followers before, during and after event to encourage continued participation and/or feedback on performance”. Based on the received feedback, these leaders make adjustments to strategies or processes that create success for followers. One in-game example was provided by informant 1M who described the interaction with a follower having difficult with the in-game mechanics of a specific battle. In an effort to improve his feedback, he developed a strategy improved the follower’s in-game performance. “I said… No… just push one on 3,2,1... now and he would push it.” By providing these specific steps the follower received his first taste of success and encouraged to participate.

Insight through reflection. 1M shared a story about a goo monster what provided “an opportunity for reflection to strengthen” his resolve and that of his follower. He described the story in the following way, “So, at one point in time, we’re in this fight and this player turned into a goo monster and you have to fight this other goo monster and you have to interrupt your explosion with the explosion of the other goo monsters, all your bars change and all of your abilities change you have to use the new abilities. So it’s a lot to take in and he could just never
get it.” After providing some step-by-step instructions, 1M’s follower was able to become successful within the game and provided an opportunity for both leader and follower to reflect. 1M felt that he can motivate players by giving them a taste of success and followers can learn from their scaffolded experience, discovering the techniques to overcome in-game challenges.

**Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation).** Problem solving in-game with a focus on innovation, transparency and insightful collaboration are key points found in this characteristic of transformational leaders. Although 1M did describe at least one aspect of each sub-characteristic, his leadership role does not focus on providing an in-game environment that is largely analytical. By his own admission, “I’m not very good at the mechanics, but once I’ve experienced the encounter, I’m really good at seeing what needs to happen and making the call out.” Working with other in-game leaders to compensate for this deficiency he is able to make significant contributions in other areas of the guild.

**Transparency.** In this one example from the interview, 1M participated a collective guild leadership decision to expel a disruptive member. The process was inclusive of all relevant parties and transparent pertaining to all decisions between the guild leadership and guild member. The guild leadership had “spoke to her many times” regarding her disruptive behavior, but their efforts to assist her to conformity to the groups social norms failed. 1M described their decision to remove her from the guild in the following way, “We were constantly putting out fires that she seem to be starting. So the three of us came to the conclusion that this (the game) is our time too and I don’t want to spend it like this anymore.”

**Data driven solutions.** In the context of his in of game guild activities, 1M did not describe any examples where he worked with followers to develop data driven solutions.
Continuous improvement. In an example that describes in an individual struggling during an in-game battle, 1M developed a process that provided the player an opportunity to improve in-game. by providing some exposure to the in-game mechanics of a battle, the player can incrementally improve and learn by doing. He further describes how he has applied this concept in this classroom in the following way, “when you teach writing, some students just feel they just can’t do it. Then they never do because they feel like they can’t, so they never even try. Whereas who you are or where you are… if you start writing you’re going to become a better writer. Just by doing it.”

Culture of problem solving. This sub-characteristic is indicative of leaders who “Creates a Culture of Problem Solving: by debriefing situations, events, strategy talk, focusing on iteration rather than failure.” The in-game example provided by 1M was his experience with the day-to-day activities of the guild bank. “I was in charge of dealing with the guild bank, because one time I was really proficient at making money in the game.” As a informant in an integral part of the guild’s bank, he participated in daily events and activities that developed a culture of problem solving with its members and leadership.

Recommends strategies. Leaders presenting strategic and/or tactical recommendations for discussion with other leaders or guild members are defined by this sub-characteristic of transformational leaders. Within the context of in-game battle, 1M describes his initial role and strategy as, “[name] and [name] would refine the strategy, the battle would need this person to focus fire this thing and I would make call outs.” During game play, if the group begins struggle and no one has offered any solutions, 1M would also recommend a change of strategy, “if the group is struggling that’s usually when I contribute and speak up.”
Solutions on follower abilities. Leaders who exhibit this sub-characteristic provide alternative solutions based on knowledge of followers skills and abilities for success. A combination of incorporating in-game performance feedback and knowledge of player’s abilities, the example provided by 1M illustrates his ability to scaffold and step through the in-game battle with struggling players. “So, we’re doing an attempt and finally I said. “No! Just press one in 3,2,1, bam!” and he would push it. Then I would say “Press Two in 3,2,1”. So I just broke it down to the numbers.” In example 1M identified, evaluated and developed a solution for the struggling player that took into his account past performance and in-game skill set.

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). Based on his description of characteristics pertaining to transformational leadership, this in-game characteristic is one that creates a nurturing and supportive environment that takes into account the needs of its followers, Individualized Consideration. Although the raw description numbers did not rank as high as those found in the first characteristic, it is still important to note in what context 1M referred to these sub-categories. The context described the subsequent sub-characteristics involve the expulsion of players, the scaffolding and development of a struggling players.

Considering the situation. This sub-characteristic takes into consideration the follower’s personal situation. The example used by 1M describes an event where guild leadership allowed the return of two individuals who were in originally kicked out for loot drama, when a policy was in place. “We let two people in because they were good players and it ended up causing us problems later on.” Although guild leadership were considerate of the returning players, especially because of their in-game skills, they were not considerate of their own “no loot drama” policy and individuals who never violated it.
Connecting individual values. In-game leaders who display this sub-characteristic connect the values of the individual to the values of the group. The in-game example used to illustrate this concept was the return of two expelled members to the guild for loot drama. In this example, the returning individuals placed value on the loot or in-game rewards. Their return marked a time when the guild or groups focus was on “beating the boss” and not working on the development of the team. Had the guild not placed so much emphasis on beating the boss, the expelled guild members would not have been reinstated.

Nurturing followers. By creating a supportive in-game environment, transformational leaders nurture the development of skills and abilities of their followers. 1M provided this environment by providing the necessary scaffolding that enable in him to be successful during an in-game battle. By providing the necessary scaffolding to a struggling player he was able to first learn the mechanics behind a successful battle engagement and then learn from each successive encounter. 1M described the reasoning behind this initial step, “He didn’t need to know what it does; he just needed to know when to push the “freaking” button. So that’s what I would do.” By providing that first step, the player can learn and be encouraged that the task before him isn’t, impossible.

Followers needs. Leaders are often reflective and thoughtful on the need of followers. 1M provided one such example, “There was a member who didn’t know how to do some of the most basic of tasks in-game and I was ready to let them go… but one of the other guild officers...said… No! Give me some time with her and now, she got into one of the best 10 men in the US and she’s in the top 125 men guild.” An example of a time when he was relieved not to let a struggling the guild member go, the nurturing environment of the guild members and officers benefited the player.
**Out-of-game leadership.** As a leader in the classroom and amongst his faculty peers, 1M is faced with a different set of circumstances and out-of-game challenges. Continuing to use the Opportunities for Transformational Leadership rubric for in- and out-of-game, informant 1M continued to show a strong relationship in three out-of-game sub-characteristics all found in Idealized Influence or Charisma. As described in the previous in-game section, individuals who exhibit this characteristic are examples of the social norms evident in their group or community and conduct themselves and execute decisions based on principled concepts rooted in the social norms of their group or community. Although they were not described with such frequency, the remaining leadership sub-characteristics will also be studied and included. It is important to note the out-of-game context, so we may later compare the potential for in- and out-of-game factors that shape a leader's interaction with his followers. This next section illustrates 1M’s out-of-game leadership experiences within the framework of Transformational Leadership’s four criterions, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** The out-of-game contexts of the three leadership sub-characteristics described by 1M include interactions with students, and workplace community. Of all five sub-characteristics, only three were described with the relative frequency identified by the informant’s *Visible Leadership, Decision Making and Leader’s expectations.*

**Visible leadership.** As previously described in the in-game section, sub-characteristic *Visible Leadership* plays an important role in 1M’s professional success as a leader. His visibility for his students and college community has enabled him to address student needs, participate in professional opportunities offered to the senior most faculty and interact with college administration to address the needs and concerns of faculty. In one example, he
describes how he effectively said “No” to a request by the Provost, and further said, “why don’t you just tell me or write up what you want to say and I’ll share it with the group.” As the writing departments representative to administration, his words had the collective weight of all writing faculty and the answer of “No” did not come solely from informant 1M, but from everyone he represented.

*Setting the example.* Illustrates a leader's ability to provide followers with specific behaviors accepted as a social norm within a group. Described by 1M a total of three times, he provided two examples that included his selection by tenured faculty to create a specialized course, interactions with college administration and his insight on negotiations, which he applies, in- and out-of-game. The tenured faculty example he provided included the following, “I was asked to fill in for a tenured faculty. It was a whole lot more work and not any more pay.” This first statement indicates that he was trusted with an unusual opportunity, not typically extended to a lower ranking part time faculty member. The next example, “He wanted a quarter of our time and I had to say “No”.” comes from 1M’s conversation with the Provost. An accepted social norm in his group, the faculty did not replace him after his exchange with the second highest position at his institution. Lastly, when asked what aspect of his in-game leadership he calls upon in the workplace, he provided the final example, “an element of trust in the person you’re working with has similar goals.” By modeling his desire to build relationships in- and out-of-game, his followers learn from his negotiation style and communication techniques to resolving conflict.

*Decision making.* It is based on ethical and moral standards, which play an important role in the discipline of students, interaction with college administration and peer negotiations. He further explained the standard of trust during negotiations in the following way, “there has to
be an element that you care about, but there also has to be an element of trust that the person you’re working with has similar goals.” Out-of-game leaders are often faced with ethical or political challenges preventing the advancement of ideas or opportunities. 1M have successfully applied this practice in- and out-of-game to ensure that decisions are made built on a foundation of workplace leadership and follower feedback. Through these standards, leaders communicate standards in the form of standard practice guides and institutional policies in the workplace and setting the state for expectations.

*Representing the group.* This sub-characteristic was described only once by informant 1M, where he represented his peers in an exchange with college administration. “Why don’t you just tell me or write up what you want to say and I’ll share with the group?” In this exchange, 1M acted as the representative of the group and was actively engaged with the Provost office. Through this interaction with an individual outside of his peer group, he will receive and disseminate the information to his constituents.

*Leader’s expectations.* In the previous example, trust provides an example of this sub-characteristic, which describes a leader’s expectation of a follower’s role. As identified by informant 1M, trust is an attribute expected of all followers to work collaboratively and achieve a common goal. If that trust is not there or has been violated in some way, the follower is either disciplined or removed from the group. In the case of the disruptive student, 1M could not trust him to interact respectfully and contribute positively in the classroom, requiring the removal of the student. By clearly defining the policies of the workplace environment or guidelines of a syllabus, followers were provided clear expectations of their role within a group and their place within a team.
**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** As masters of their own domain, it can be difficult to create excitement and participation to a group that sees no benefit to their students, discipline or alignment with their values. Within the context of a classroom, 1M describe his communication and relationship with is students to leader-follower interactions. Within the context of leading his peer faculty group, his ability to persuade comes from meeting the collective goals and values of his community. Although this characteristic does not have significant numbers compared to the previous section, 1M describes a negotiation technique which he employs to provide groups or individuals to consider alternative solutions.

**Alternative solutions.** “Persuades followers to consider alternative solutions”. The three examples provided by the informant have a foundation in self-discovery, which help followers identify then consider alternative solutions in their lives or workplace. The first example is within the context of a instructor-student relationship. As the leader (instructor) 1M provided a writing prompt that encourages students to “Consider how your language affects others.” This exercise encourages followers (students) to write and consider alternatives as a result of their communication with others. The second example involves his representation of faculty group on a committee whose purpose is to overcome a perceived herculean reaccreditation challenge. At this time most faculty are not confident of the institution’s future success and fear for their jobs. However, 1M’s attitude and perspective get’s “everyone excited about the HLC stuff” (Higher Learning Commission), offering an alternative solution from the current dire atmosphere. The third example is based on a negotiation technique 1M has applied to enable differing parties to consider alternative solutions. 1M believes that the first step to considering alternative solutions is to identify them via a negotiation technique. Requiring the trust of both parties and two honestly answered questions provide the first step to considering these
alternative solutions. “What’s the real issue here?” “How do we move forward even if we feel passionately… differently about things?” With the passion of their stance, seeing the need to move forward as their common ground, and acknowledging their differences, both parties are able to see and possibly consider alternative solutions they can both agree. 1M has used this technique in conflicts that occur both in- and out-of-game.

Encouraging participation. “Encourages followers to continue participation in group goals and activities” is accomplished largely by the communication style of the leader and interpretation of the message to followers. Out-of-game, Alternative Solutions (persuading followers to consider alternative solutions) and Encouraging Participation can be related to one another, if the alternative solution is communicated in a way to encourage participation in followers. In the example portrayed by 1M’s participation in the HLC committee, his positive outlook and enthusiasm encouraged participation in his peer group to address the challenge that face his institution. He describes his exuberance in the following way, “I did volunteer to get everyone excited about the HLC stuff and meet new people to be a positive change.” Within the context of his peer group, his positivity dissuaded the fears felt by his community, allowing them to take action.

Connecting group values. In the context of his out-of-game representation of his peers to college administration or classroom interaction with students, 1M did not describe any examples where he connected “values of the group to the values of the individual”. As described earlier, 1M’s institution was in the process of obtaining accreditation, which can be a stressful time for both faculty and institution. It can be surmised that the values of the group/institution permeated every aspect of all decisions made by his peer group. Secondly, the
values of his classroom are typically derived from instructor leader. In both instances there is a pre-existing set of values borne out of necessity and culture.

*Communicate performance.* In the context of his out-of-game representation of his peers to college administration or classroom interaction with students, 1M did not describe any examples where he communicated “to followers before, during and after event to encourage continued participation and/or feedback on performance”. As a representative of his peers is leadership does not require the communication of performance. Although he did his delegate duties to his peers, the communication of their job performance is based on the assigned faculty member’s contribution to the peer group. Managing success through their contribution with the community, failure to complete their assigned responsibilities could diminish their standing in their peer group. Absent is the feedback typically found between instructor and student. It may be surmised that this communication typically found within the classroom is a universal occurrence and an understood standard in the learning process.

*Insight through reflection.* Within the context of the classroom, M’s quick story regarding the development of a poem provided “an opportunity for reflection to strengthen the resolve” of teacher and student. With insight aimed at preparing and delivering a product, both leader and follower are provided this insight in the following way, “Just like a very good poem… There’s a certain point that you can’t prep anymore and you just have to go with what you’ve got. There’s just not enough time.” The telling of a story to provide an insight and motivate is a technique utilized by leaders to express complex and abstract ideas to followers. The poem story enabled 1M to discover and accept ones limits to a given task and “going with what you’ve got”.
**Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation).** Out-of-game problem solving for 1M is within the context of his contributions in the classroom and leading a faculty peer group in projects with college administration. The sub-characteristics of this area are noted for their transparency, data driven solutions, continuous improvement and culture of problem solving, recommends strategies, and solutions on follower abilities. Although the number of out-of-game descriptions were not significantly higher, it is important to understand the out-of-game context that play a role in the relationship between leader and follower.

*Transparency.* As the leader of various projects for his peer group, he provided a description of his duties, which identifies him as part of an environment, which is inclusive and transparent. He described his out-of-game leadership role “as a focuser, mediator, and reporter. My members tell me what they want and I try to make it happen for them and keep everyone on task.” As a component of a leadership group, 1M serve his members by providing the transparency assisting with the completion of tasks for his faculty group.

*Data driven solutions.* In the context of his out-of-game representation of his peers to college administration or classroom interaction with students, 1M did not describe any examples where he worked with followers to develop data driven solutions.

*Continuous improvement.* Aside from the in-game description of scaffolding a player/student, 1M did not describe any out-of-game examples where he developed processes for continuous improvement.

*Culture of problem solving.* The out-of-game activity provided by 1M describes the creation of a culture with is faculty peer group by clearly articulating a vision/goal pertaining to the lowering of student numbers in a given writing class. “Our vision/goal is to get the caps lowered on all the writing classes.” Through this guiding policy, the group can identify possible
events that bring attention to the group’s vision for smaller class sizes. Until the issue is addressed, 1M will continue to develop goals and activities that meet that specific mission.

Recommends strategies. In the context of his out-of-game representation of his peers to college administration or classroom interaction with students, 1M did not describe any examples where he presented strategic and/or tactical recommendations for discussion.

Solutions on follower abilities. Leader provides alternative solutions based on knowledge of followers skills and abilities for success. As an adjunct faculty member, 1M were provided an opportunity to develop a new course with another faculty member in a very short amount of time. As part of that process he identified the requirements for the course and evaluated the skill set of the collaborating faculty member. “Next thing you know I’m making some last minute changes to create a special course. I pulled it off. I picked up another persons project and made it successful. It was a collaborative endeavor.” The result was a successful course.

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). This fourth characteristic describes leaders, who create environments that allow followers to be supportive and nurtured, which takes into account every aspect of their development. There are two out-of-game contexts 1M referred to in this characteristic. The first is in the classroom and working with an aggressive and confrontational student. The second is his interaction with is faculty peer group.

Considering the situation. In his classroom, 1M takes into consideration the student’s personal situation and works with the student to engage and participate in class. 1M described his interaction with the student in this way, “As he was leaving tried to talk to him and said, “I don’t mean anything by it”, I’m just trying to get you to do the work.” As a safe and nurturing
environment, 1M reached out to his student and attempted to provide whatever support was necessary to ensure the student’s success.

*Connecting individual values.* Within the context of his peer faculty group, 1M connected the values of fellow faculty to the values of the institution, as part of his reaccreditation duties. After speaking an meeting with his fellow faculty members, he “delegated some duties to faculty, based on their interest, skills and who may be best to represent the group.”

*Nurturing followers.* Out-of-game 1M has nurtured the development of skills and abilities of followers from his own peer group. As the faculty leader and representative for college administration, he “delegated some duties to faculty, based on their interest, skills and who may be best to represent the group.” By taking the abilities of each follower into account assigning them accordingly, 1M’s the group can be assured to have excellent representation for their department and appropriate skills to complete the tasks of the group.

*Followers needs.* From within the classroom, 1M were reflective and thoughtful to the needs of his students by reaching out to the one disruptive student. Once 1M made a number of attempts to engage the student, which ended in a more disruptive situation. Faced with a difficult situation he had the student removed from his class for the good and safety of his remaining students. 1M described the situation in this way, “In his other writings he described how he took hallucinogenic drugs, and he was a member of the ultimate fighting team and the only reason he was there was because someone he respected said he needed to be there. In the meantime, he was very combative in my class and called me a faggot. So I had him removed from my class.” Initially taking focusing on the needs of his one student, he switched to focus on the development needs of his other students.
Utilizing the Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics from Chapter 3, this section will explore and evaluate informant 1M’s guild website for the four transformational leadership characteristics Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. A mixture of text and images this section will provide a public view of informant 1M’s guild events and activities around the framework of transformational leadership.

1MGFW: charisma. The 1MGFW supports evidence of Idealized Influence. Under the section labeled Recruitment is a post titled “Guild Regulation”. Within the body of the message are rules and information pertaining to Raid Times, Current Officers, Recruitment, Attendance, Loot, Reputation, Guild Rankings, Raid Rules, and Performance Evaluations. This information provides to new and veteran members standards of conduct during game play and expectations of guild leadership. All of the standards and regulations for the guild are in one place, which makes it easy for anyone to view.
1MGFW: inspiring others. Found on the 1MGFW website are options and links to communicate the high standards of the guild and encourage participation in guild activities and events, Inspirational Motivation. To encourage players to get involved, the website offers images of in-game guild accomplishment and 1MGFW forums. The images posted on the guild website typically include its members and a downed boss in the background. The members gather around for a picture and the quality of the image allows for visitors and guild members the ability to read the names of each avatar. These images encourage members to participate in the next guild event. Although there are not any videos of guild activities, there are a number of pictures taken by guild members of raid events in a variety of areas and challenges on a gallery link.
Also found on the website is a link to the 1MGFW forums. Topics found in the general discussion range from game play/strategy information to food recipes. Officer’s guild members alike are freely share information and content in the 1MGFW forums.

![Figure 18. 1MGFW guild discussion](image)

**1MGFW: collaborating towards a solution.** Defined as Intellectual Stimulation, the website has opportunities for leaders and followers to collaborate on raid strategies and access data pertaining to guild and individual performance (World of Logs). The guild forums are a source of strategies and information of past, current and upcoming raids. As seen in the thread below, raider leaders are sharing strategy videos of upcoming raids and members are posting their interest in participating as well statistics on their avatar. Also include in the thread are special notes that indicate special boss attributes, tips on where to stand, and what to expect as each milestone within the battle is reached. Also found on the website is a link to World of Logs, which provides “In-depth World of Warcraft Log Analysis” on guild and individual performance. The website provides a great deal of data on performance, gear, and the environment.
1MGFW: nurturing others. Integral to Individualized Consideration, the website creates a very supportive environment by providing a suggestion box and a recruitment application. The suggestion box provides anonymous feedback on any issues any guild member may have. Simply type in a suggestion, enter the captcha message and press the “Submit Suggestion Button”.

Figure 19. 1MGFW member and guild performance reporting

Figure 20. 1MGFW suggestion box
Also found on the guild website is an application form to join the guild. The questions found on the form also touch on the four leadership characteristics and provide some insight into the social norms a new member to the guild may expect from its leaders. Examples of questions found on the recruiting page that would be associated with the four behaviors would include the following:

**Idealized Influence:**

- Do you know any current member(s) of 1MGFW that would vouch for you?
- Describe your Raiding experience both past and current content. We do not care if you cleared Sunwell in Cataclysm so don't over-exaggerate your experience.

**Inspirational Motivation:**

- Please provide a link to a screenshot/video of your user interface.
- Tell us about yourself.

**Intellectual Stimulation:**

- Please provide an armory link for your character. You must be in PvE spec/gear.
- Please provide a link to your most recent combat log parse or raidbots link.
- What resources, theory crafting, or specific models do you follow for your class? Be specific.

**Individualized consideration:**

- Tell us about your history with your past guild(s) and why you are leaving.
- Describe why you are considering 1MGFW as your future raiding guild.
The survey: informant 1M. As described in Chapter 3 of Phase II, Questionnaire informant 1M complete an online survey of their perceived transformational leadership style, measuring the four traits of Idealized Influence or Charisma (IN), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). A faculty member with a high Idealized Influence would demonstrate principled decision making processes based on high moral/ethical standards and act as an example to peers and students. Faculty with a high Inspirational Motivation has the ability to persuade peers and students to consider alternative solutions and encourage continued participation in classroom or group activities. A high Intellectual Stimulation indicates faculty who are largely innovative, collaborative and data driven. Leaders in education with a high Individual Consideration create supportive and nurturing environments mindful of the needs of followers. The online survey closely measures these four characteristics. Called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the survey consists of 43 questions using a 5 point frequency Likert scale (0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Frequently, if not always). Once completed the
results are tabulated and sent to the researcher for evaluation. Displayed below is the result of informant 1M’s MLQ survey.

Table 7.

*Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Data: Informant 1M*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Idealized Influence (IN)</th>
<th>Inspirational Motivation (IM)</th>
<th>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</th>
<th>Individual Consideration (IC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1M</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information indicates informant 1M perceives himself as a leader with the following traits (in order of frequency):

- Individualized Consideration (most frequent)
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Idealized Influence
- Inspirational Motivation (least frequent)

**Leadership relationships among interview, website and survey.** Combining 1M’s interview, website and leadership survey, we see an interplay between his in- and out-of-game leadership roles, as guild officer and academic faculty leader. To understanding the lived leadership experience in- and out-of-games, we must understand how informant 1M perceives himself, how this community scaffolds his perceptions as a leader and how the transformational leadership experiences manifest themselves across similar contexts in an out-of-game.

A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was taken by informant 1M and assess him to perceive himself as one who Nurtures Others (Individualized Consideration). As described in the previous section (The survey: informant 1M), 1M received scores ranking in highest frequency (highest to lowest) in the following order Individualized Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation. It certainly
corresponds to his out-of-game role as leader in the classroom, informant 1M perceives himself as leader who creates a nurturing environment, continues to be sensitive to the needs of followers, has a focus on creativity, and encourages insightful collaboration.

1M’s in- and out-of-game communities provide a variety of resources to support his is followers. Faculty has a variety of workplace resources to support students. An example of Idealize Influence, a syllabus can provide a written representation of the high standards of conduct expected in the classroom. Thought provoking concepts assignments (a writing prompt) designed to engage participation can be an an example of Inspirational Motivation. Intellectual Stimulation can describe group collaboration amongst students or peer groups focused on creativity and problem solving. Accessible content delivered in multiple formats to students by faculty can also be an example for Individualized Consideration. The guild can act as a platform to scaffold the needs of its members and leadership. Earlier in this section titled “Guild Forum/Website:1MGFW”, 1M’s guild websites displayed similar transformational leadership resources in support of its community. With the rich variety of resources available to leaders they can employ the four transformation characteristics to scaffold followers in any environment.

Overcoming a challenging concept with the help of a nurturing leader can manifest itself out-of-game. In this example, a raid member was having a particularly difficult time with an in-game battle. After a number of failed attempts 1M tells the player that the next time he is in the middle of the battle, follow 1M’s instructions by “just press one in 3,2,1, BAM!” The struggling player would press the “one” button when he was told and then suddenly be able to make it through the in-game challenge. 1M summarized the instructions in the following way, I “broke it down to the numbers.” He went further and said he applied this same technique out-
of-game, with his writing students. 1M explain that there were some students who struggle with writing and believe “they just can’t do it.” So 1M would break it down for the students, “if you start writing you’re going to become a better writer. Just by doing it.” With 1M and his community’s resources, followers are scaffolded in- and out-of-game environment to overcome difficult challenges. Within the framework of Transformational Leadership characteristics, the experience of overcoming a challenge can be illustrated in the following way:

- **Idealized Influence**: 1M exhibited his Leader’s Expectations to his followers by providing them with the necessary resource, encouragement and opportunity to improve.

- **Inspirational Motivation**: Inspired by the solutions provided by 1M, followers begin “to realize that its doable” and persevere towards their goal.

- **Intellectual Stimulation**: Collaborating towards a solution by “breaking it down to the numbers”, followers are given the necessary directions towards continuous improvement.

- **Individualized Consideration**: After a number of failed attempts 1M nurtured followers initiating a dialog that creates a supportive environment.

As a faculty member who was described by the MLQ survey to have the strongest characteristics of Individualized consideration and Intellectual Stimulation, his assistance with the struggling raid member and writing student coincides with the leadership assessment. With 1M providing the necessary coaching, both communities offered a variety of resources, such as theorycrafting and tutoring, respectively, to scaffold followers towards their goals and experiences with others. Values like trust define our perceptions of self and our relationships, which span in- and out-of-game environments. These values can provide salient experiences in
an MMO (In Game: *Alternative Solutions*) or the workplace (Out-of-game: *Setting the Example*) that can shape our leadership experiences in- and out-of-game.

**Informant Profile: Information Technology Professional**

Informant 2F, a self-identified leader in- and out-of-game, she is an information technology manager, former bookstore manager and a World of Warcraft (WoW) guild officer for the 2FGFW (2F Guild Forum/Website). A female in her mid forties, she described her technical abilities as expert, and an everyday user of the Internet and describes herself as using social media at least once a week. She plays approximately twenty or more (20+) hours per week In-game play and describes her frequency as every day. Her in-game avatar is a female, warlock and human. She has played WoW for approximately six years and her main character for all six years. A former Bookstore Manager and current Information Technology Manager, she managed as many as ten to three staff employees in her varied career in both the private and public sector. As guild and class leader, her duties in-game are recruiting; review of class gear; strategy and mediation of in-game conflict. Her knowledge of follower mentoring in- and out-of-game for the public and private sectors can provide insight and patterns of leadership characteristics. Given guilds are built from the ground up, as with most businesses, her decision-making processes and lived experiences in the business sector (specially a startup) provide an interesting parallel between the in- and out-of-game environments. Within the framework of the four Transformational Leadership characteristics, the following sections will provide a detailed account of Informant 2F’s leadership experiences in- and out-of-game, community dialog found their public guild website and results of their leadership survey.

**In-game leadership.** During the in-game interview, informant 2F described instances primarily characterized as Idealized Influence and individualized consideration. Leaders, who exhibit strength in these two characteristics, are charismatic and have a focus on nurturing
others. In game, she can be described as visible leader who embodies the standards of their community, creates a supportive guild environment and listens to the needs of her followers. 2F is also well informed of the guilds rules, guidelines and expect followers to adhere to the group’s standards and social norms. With her primary role as a mentor and class leader, she works closely with prospective and new members to maximize In-game gear, learn techniques to improve In-game performance and evaluate of raid performance for continuous improvement.

The remaining characteristics of Inspirational Motivation and Intellectual Stimulation will also be included to better understand the context of her in- and out-of-game leadership. Within the context of in-game play and interaction with guild members, the following sections will describe 2F’s experiences, framed by Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** The strongest of all leadership characteristics, 2F provided multiple examples of Charisma. Described as a characteristics that portrays to followers high standards of moral and ethical conduct, 2F described at least one example of the five sub-characteristics which include Visible Leadership, Setting the Example, Decision Making, Representing the Group and Leader’s expectations.

**Visible leadership.** Her role as mediator requires her In-game and sometimes out-of-game presence. Member often confide in and share personal information. “I'm the mediator and peacemaker in the guild. They tell me all the confidential information.” Issues discussed typically range from in- and out-of-game issues.

**Setting the example.** Some six years ago when 2F wanted to improve her WoW avatar she began the practice of researching and reading. To this day as a class and guild officer, she continues to use this practice to improve her skill set and the performance of her followers. “I
would in do research to problem solve and discover new perspectives. Either through readings, discussions or experience, I would obtain a variety of skills to help prepare me for something that I may be facing today or could potentially face in the future.” She goes further and says it is an important practice to her the practice is something she continues out-of-game to improve her team and herself.

**Decision making.** When recruiting new members for a guild or raid, Informant 2F must interview new candidates and ask them a series of questions to identify if they would conform to the social norms of the group. “I would ask them questions an out-of-game manager would ask a prospective employee, why did you end up leaving your last position.” Based on this interview and knowledge of guild rules and guidelines, new applicants are accepted or denied membership.

**Representing the group.** A representative of guild leadership, she acts as a mediator between two groups or guild members. In the instance described she occasionally represents the authority of leadership to find a resolution to raid or guild issues. “The mediation role especially during a raid becomes very important because sometimes, in the middle of a raid people just quit.”

**Leader’s expectations.** As part of her role in the guild, she meets with and mentors new guild members. As part of her duties, 2F describes the rules and processes of the guild. “I'd help them out and show them what will be expected of them. Class leaders and mentor… that’s me.” She becomes so much a part of the process, she embodies the the role and takes on her guild duties out-of-game.

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** As a leader of a highly successful raid team, 2F describes how there is a cycle of participation in raid activities for the latest In-game
rewards. Participation is highest during the introduction of an expansion and quickly tapers off once when a new one is introduced into the game. Because of this ebb and flow, raid leaders may be faced one day with turning away players from a waiting list to finding players with the requisite skills and experience to makeup a team. The examples provided in this section portray this contrast in player participation based on the introduction of new In-game material. As describe earlier, the instances for this characteristic was not significant but work bearing, especially in the sub-characteristic of Encouraging participation. Although the remaining three sub-categories did not rank as high, they do merit consideration when evaluated with data further in this paper.

**Alternative solutions.** This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to provide alternative solutions to followers in an effort to encourage participation in guild activities. 2F did not describe any in-game examples that provided Alternative Solutions.

**Encouraging participation.** This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to persuade participation in guild activities. 2F did not describe any in-game examples that conform to Encouraging participation.

**Connecting group values.** 2F provides to new players the scaffolding necessary to participate and enjoy current and future guild activities. “I take any new members in the warlock class under my wing” By doing so, she imparts the values of the guild to new players, who intern allows for their assimilation and success in the guild and future in guild activities.

**Communicate performance.** 2F provides information and feedback to all new guild members, especially with players in her class before, during and after a raid. According to her she sees “see what kind of gear” and evaluates “their performance in raids”. The purpose of and
result of the evaluation, as described by the informant is to make them as effective or better, during an In-game challenge.

*Insight through reflection.* This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to express some In-game insight to followers and her peer group. 2F did not describe any in-game examples that provided insight through reflection.

*Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation).* As officer and class leader her primary duties are in the development of new guild members and their ability to leverage In-game tools to improve performance. 2F provides the scaffolding necessary to develop player effectiveness during In-game activities, such as raids. As a representative of guild leadership, she described examples relevant to *data driven solutions, continuous improvement, and culture of problem solving* of members. Although she did not make any specific mention or example

*Transparency.* This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to create transparency with followers and her peer group. 2F did not describe any in-game examples that displayed this characteristic.

*Data driven solutions.* The example provided by 2F, which shows how she used data to solve an In-game challenge, is by evaluating the performance of new raid members. Through the review of data with the raid member, she can make recommendation on how the new raid member can improve using online tools. “Using the different online tools and resource on the Internet, everyone I’ve mentored reaches the same level of DPS as me, if not more so.” Armed with this information players and improve their Damage Per Second (DPS) during the next encounter.

*Continuous improvement.* As part of her mentorship, 2F teaches players how to continuously improve their abilities from data gathered by online tools and from feedback from
veteran players. “Mentoring someone, giving them the tools and providing them the guidance out-of-game, I do the same thing in game.” A practice not limited to her In-game experiences, she applies the same techniques out-of-game.

*Culture of problem solving.* During the course of her mentorship and dialog with new guild and raid members, 2F shares examples that enable players to overcome In-game challenges they may face on the field or with their avatar. Through her dialog, “everyone I’ve mentored reach the same level of DPS as me.” Using herself as the standard, she empowers every new player to connect with his or her community to solve any problem in or out-of-game.

*Recommends strategies.* This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to recommend strategies to followers and her peer group. 2F did not describe any in-game examples that displayed this characteristic.

*Solutions on follower abilities.* This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to create identify solutions based on a combination of follower or followers skills and abilities. 2F did not describe any in-game examples that displayed this characteristic.

*Nurturing others (individualized consideration).* Informant 2F provided examples for all four transformational leadership sub-characteristics. As the mentor and leader to new members, she showed consideration toward their situation, connected their individual values to that of the guild, and nurtured new followers and their needs.

*Considering the situation.* The example provided by informant 2F pertains to the departure of a member during a raid event. During an agreed upon intermission during the raid, she took an inordinate amount of time returning and was expelled from the raid. As the guild mediator 2F contacted the expelled raid member and acted as an advocate. She “work with the officers to get them to see her situation and that her family came first.” Although the individual
was expelled, there is now a statement regarding the importance of out-of-game activities taking precedence over In-game events.

*Connecting individual values.* As one of the primary interviewees, 2F meets with new guild applicants to obtain a preview and understanding to where individual values may be more closely aligned with the group. “I would ask them questions (as part of recruiting or new hires), why did you end up leaving your last position. What is your schedule? Would you be interested in playing another class?” Through the connecting of individual values to that of the group, the new guild member instantly feels connected and easily assimilated into the community.

*Nurturing followers.* Teaching new players the process by which new gear is evaluated to maximize effectiveness was the example provided by 2F to nurture followers. According to her, she has and continues to be successful leading new guild and raid members, “I’m proud to say that, gear for gear, they would be at the same level with me after I’m through with them.” Through her mentorship she not only improves the performance of the individual, but also the effectiveness of the guild.

*Followers needs.* Sensitive to the needs of her guild members, 2F is available in- and out-of-game to meet with guild members and address issues pertaining to conflict. As part of her discussions, members often share private out-of-game information and she works to find a positive resolution between the two parties. “I'm the mediator and peacemaker in the guild. They tell me all the confidential information. Its important to be available on and off hours.”

*Out-of-game leadership.* A manager for a bookstore and for IT, she was responsible for the staff and resources in her area. As a bookstore manager she supervised 10 employees performed a variety of duties, which included, but were not limited to inventory, staff evaluations and staff scheduling. As a manager in Information Technology, was responsible for
the hardware, software and three professional staff members assigned to the area. Compared to
the In-game examples described by 2F, the frequency and instances were not as high. However,
it is important to make note of any patterns, lived experiences and context in which leadership
characteristics were evident in- and out-of-game. This next section illustrates 2F’s out-of-game
leadership experiences within the framework of Transformational Leadership’s four criterions,
Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized
Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** Much like the In-game examples, Informant 2F also
provided an example of the five leadership sub-characteristics which include Visible
Leadership, Setting the Example, Decision Making, Representing the Group and Leader’s
expectations.

**Visible leadership.** 2F success as a leader comes from her visibility within her
workplace at the bookstore and with IT peers. Always looking to volunteer and improve herself
and her team, she is often at the forefront of technology initiatives. “Volunteering for stuff In-
game is also a behavior that has followed me and has enabled me to progress in my professional
career… I volunteer for stuff, acquire new skills, experiences and refine them along the way.”

**Setting the example.** A visible leader, 2F sets the example for her team and takes the
initiatives and looking for solutions to existing problems. “I would in do research to problem
solve and discover new perspectives. Either through readings, discussions or experience, I
would obtain a variety of skills to help prepare me for something that I may be facing today or
could potentially face in the future.” A practice she started in game, it continues to serve her in
her out-of-game workplace.
**Decision making.** When faced with a decision regarding issues pertaining to staff, 2F refers to her knowledge of workplace processes. “There are a set of rules or processes that are well defined and I don’t stray from those rules.” If the answer or decision is still unclear, she makes use of her mentors for guidance and support.

**Representing the group.** In her workplace, 2F represents the information technology department to external groups and within her own department represents the technology leadership of the institution. “I provide supervision of IT staff that serve the a campus, representing IT at department meetings.”

**Leader’s expectations.** As described from her In-game role, her followers also look to her as a mediator in the workplace. Making herself available to both guild members and workplace employees, she is not only a “peacekeeper”, but also a “mother hen.” “Mediation… I was a mediator between two employees, and get them to work peaceably together. Peacekeeper, mother hen.”

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** Informant 2F did not provide any examples of this transformational leadership characteristic. Her out-of-game leadership role may not have required her to display this characteristic or she may my be transitioning from one leadership style to another.

**Alternative solutions.** Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game examples that portray a leader's ability to express alternative solutions to followers and her peer group.

**Encouraging participation.** Much like the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game example that encourages followers to engage in workplace goals and activities.
Connecting group values. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game example that encourages leaders to connect group values to followers in the work place.

Communicate performance. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game example that provides feedback to followers before, during and after goals and activities.

Insight through reflection. Much like the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game examples where she used a story to persuade users to accomplish a specific goal or mission.

Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). Examples of out-of-game problem solving for 2F was not as significant. However, the sub-characteristics continuous improvement and culture of problem solving did have a examples relevant to this leadership characteristic. Given the tools and resources provided to her by administration, she describes herself a leader who mentors and guides staff towards success.

Transparency. Like the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game example that provides feedback to followers before, during and after goals and activities.

Data driven solutions. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game example that provides data driven feedback to followers before, during and after goals and activities.

Continuous improvement. In the workplace, 2F connects with her staff and gives them access to a variety of tools to improve their skills. As described in her interview, the practice of mentorship incorporates the use of organizational resources to improve the performance of
employees. “Mentoring someone, giving them the tools and providing them the guidance out-of-game, I do the same thing in game.”

*Culture of problem solving.* In the context of her out-of-game workplace environment, 2F would share discovered online and organizational resources to support the needs of the team or individual. “The ability to figure out the best resources are also something I’ve worked out. Learning how to weed out good from bad resources.” By sharing this information she creates an environment where a community can be nurtured to solve problems that may be relevant to the individual or group.

*Recommends strategies.* Like the In-game sub-characteristic, 2F did not describe any out-of-game example that recommends strategies to followers.

*Solutions on follower abilities.* In the workplace, 2F identified the skills necessary for success and assigned the necessary staff to ensure a timely solution. She “assigns tasks based on the staff member’s technical strengths and experience.”

*Nurturing others (individualized consideration).* 2F articulated three of the four sub-characteristics that describe a leader who nurtures others. As a manager at the public and private sector she was limited when providing assistance by the organization, due to external factors. Therefore her involvement and connection with her staff varied between her in- and out-of-game experiences. During the interview she described instances that described her *Considering the Situation, Connecting Individual Values and Nurturing Followers.*

*Considering the situation.* In her workplace environment, 2F would take into consideration the individual’s personal situation, such as learning abilities or events at home. In one example she describes a staff member who had difficulty understanding technology concepts. “Not matter what I did, she couldn’t understand the most basic task, so she was given
other tasks that weren’t so complex.” Sensitive to her followers situation she still found other opportunities for her staff member to be successful in the workplace.

Connecting individual values. In the context of her out-of-game workplace environment, 2F discussed the importance the initial interview and her ability to see where the individual’s values are aligned with the organization. “I would ask them questions (as part of recruiting or new hires), why did you end up leaving your last position. What is your schedule?” This practice and a skill is something she continues to use in- and out-of-game.

Nurturing followers. Out-of-game, 2F continues to nurture followers by taking them “under her wing” and providing the necessary scaffolding to ensure their success. “There was one individual who I took under my wing and did my best to train her, but she just couldn’t get it.” Even when the staff member had difficulty with one aspect of her job, 2F found a way to make her be successful in her duties.

Followers needs. In the context of her out-of-game workplace environment, 2F did not describe any examples where she specifically listened to a follower’s individual needs and aligned it with the group.

Figure 22. 2FGFW guild header with welcome message

The guild forum/website: the 2FGFW. Utilizing the Guild Website/Forum:

Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics from Chapter 3, this section
will explore and evaluate informant 2F’s guild website for the four transformational leadership characteristics Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. A mixture of text and images this section will provide a public view of informant 2F’s guild events and activities around the framework of transformational leadership.

**2FGFW: charisma.** The 2FGFW supports evidence of Idealized Influence by providing a complete list of guild officer, who set the standards of the guild. In this guilds case there is one Guild Master, Master Chief and six guild officers. With each officer plays a role in the operations of the guild; the guild master maintains the primary direction of the guild.

![Figure 23. 2FGFW guild officers](image)

Decided upon collaboratively by guild officers, rules that govern the social norms of the guild are also posted on the 2FGFW website for new and veteran players.

![Figure 24. 2FGFW guild guidelines](image)
The information and guidelines listed in the range from “Have fun” to a player’s out-of-game environment. A leader’s expectations of players and their role in the guild are also clearly defined by the guild’s guidelines.

*Figure 25. 2FGFW guild leader expectations*

**2FGFW: inspiring others.** Evidence, which encouraged the participation of members, in guild activities were found throughout the 2FGFW. At the main guild page was a calendar of activities, which encouraged participation of raid activities. Essentially, if you have time to participate the guild website, offered these dates/times.

*Figure 26. 2FGFW Guild Calendar*
Given its location on the guild website, 2FGFW values its ranking in the World of Warcraft. Therefore, the guild prominently posts its rankings on the page to help encourage members to participate,

Figure 27. 2FGFW guild ranking

raid history (to communicate its performance),

Figure 28. 2FGFW guild raid history

and snapshot of the next In-game challenge.

Figure 29. 2FGFW guild next boss
All of these examples are designed to inspire and motivate players into participation.

**2FGFW: collaborating towards a solution.** To create a collaborative environment that provides and utilizes data driven solutions. The 2FGFW website offers a great deal of transparency with the selection of raid teams. The image below provides the specific list of players who have earned positions on each raid team as well as the requirements they’ve met.

![Raid Teams](image1.png)

*Figure 30. 2FGFW raid teams*

Players also have access to a variety of tools to improve their In-game abilities, through data driven third party apps like Ask Mr Robot or Guild Ox.

![Online Tools](image2.png)

*Figure 31. 2FGFW online tools*

There is also a culture of problem solving in 2FGFW website evident from the multiple posts/discussions on their forums. Most notably, there is a great deal of discussion regarding strategies and tactical recommendations found in their online forums.
2FGFW: nurturing others. When nurturing guild members, a number of different options were also evident on the 2FGFW website. Interesting, the guild rules take into account the guild member’s out-of-game experience. Under Guild Guidelines, #2 states:

Real life matters are more important, please make this a priority over gaming! We will accommodate situations where real life will interfere with gaming and work with you as needed. Do not fear repercussion for living life and handling responsibilities.

This guild is certainly sensitive to the needs of its followers both in- and out-of-game. It also connects the values of the individual to the values of the group by sharing a variety informal out-of-game discussions and birthdays.
The topics presented in these forums or birthdays create a supporting and nurturing environment where players develop relationships built in game.

**The survey: informant 2F.** As described in Chapter 3 of Phase II, Questionnaire informant 2F complete an online survey of their perceived transformational leadership style, measuring the four traits of Idealized Influence or Charisma (IN), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). An information technology professional with high Individualized Consideration provides an environment that is supportive of followers needs. The support could come in the form of access to training, tools and/or communities that would improve the follower’s skills and or abilities. Leaders with this nurturing characteristic would create a supportive environment for followers, be willing to listen to their needs and make excellent mentors. The second most important trait is Idealized Influence and Intellectual Stimulation. The combination of these two traits identify a leader whose closely adheres to guild standards, and leverages existing tools and resources to overcome In-game challenges. Given the two characteristics are scored equally, they are perceived to be interchangeable and a very important part of the leaders perception of success in the community. The online survey closely measures these four characteristics. Called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the survey consists of 43 questions using a 5
point frequency Likert scale (0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Frequently, if not always). Once completed the results are tabulated and sent to the researcher for evaluation. Displayed below is the result of informant 2F’s MLQ survey.

Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Idealized Influence (IN)</th>
<th>Inspirational Motivation (IM)</th>
<th>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</th>
<th>Individual Consideration (IC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2F</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information indicates informant 2F perceives himself as a leader with the following traits (in order of frequency):

- Individualized Consideration (most frequent)
- Idealized Influence and Intellectual Stimulation
- Inspirational Motivation (least frequent)

Leadership relationships among interview, website and survey. Combining 2F’s interview, website and leadership survey, we see an interplay between her in- and out-of-game leadership roles, as guild officer and technology leader. To understanding the lived leadership experience in- and out-of-games, the informant must understand how she perceives herself, how this community scaffolds her perceptions as a leader and how the transformational leadership experiences manifest themselves across similar contexts in an out-of-game.

A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was taken by informant 2F and assesses her to perceive herself as one who Nurtures Others (Individualized Consideration). As described in the previous section (The survey: informant 2F), 2F received scores ranking in highest frequency (highest to lowest) in the following order Individualized Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation. It certainly
corresponds to her in- and out-of-game role as mentor/leader, informant 2F perceives herself as leader who leads by example that nurtures through data based feedback of performances, honest dialog of values and expectations, and a scaffolding of experts in a community.

2F’s in- and out-of-game communities provide a variety of resources to support her are followers. Out-of-game, 2F’s followers have a variety of workplace resources to support their personal and professional goals. These resources include training through professional development, certifications and one on one on-demand sessions. Mental health and financial services counseling is also available for employees if they need have a need for this support, all examples of individualized consideration. In game, resources for guild members include tools that measure performance and evaluate gear. However, when it comes to the nurturing of members in game, resources are not as robust. Therefore 2F spends a great deal of time communicating with peers and members, in- and out-of-game. She has shared her out-of-game contact information with guild members and spends a great deal of time acting as a mediator and at times advocate for players. As described in the section titled “Guild Forum/Website:2FGFW”, a rich variety of resources are available to leaders and followers, which employ the four transformation characteristics.

Nurturing others is a transformational leadership characteristic that manifests itself both in- and out-of-game. As a leader in game, she would use a variety of in online resources to measure her effectiveness and the effectiveness of her followers. Out-of-game, a number of institutional resources are available to develop follower’s personal and professional goals. By connecting a followers personal values to the values of the guild or organization, they become quickly assimilated by the group and contributions to their community identified by subject matter experts. Embodying the standards of her in- and out-of-game communities, followers
comply and conform to the rules and guidelines defined in the course of her mentorship. With the basic rules and guidelines as a foundation, she can scaffold followers or “take them under her wing” and put them on a path to continuous improvement, which directly benefits the needs of the individual and perpetuates the values of the community. Within the framework of Transformational Leadership characteristics, the experience of overcoming a challenge can be illustrated in the following way:

- **Idealized Influence**: 2F served as an example for followers, who is well versed the rules, guidelines and social norms of her community.

- **Intellectual Stimulation**: Leveraging both in- and out-of-game resources, 2F works collaboratively with followers to create a culture of problem solving and improvement.

- **Individualized Consideration**: 2F’s desire to nurture others is at the core of her mentorship. She is often available to members of her community and holds the title of peacekeeper and mediator in- and out-of-game.

  Individualized consideration is at the very center of 2F’s leadership transformational leadership. So strong is this characteristic, it permeates nearly every aspect of 2F’s behavior. Out-of-game leaders, diminishing the need to provide extensive support of followers, utilize organizations where resources are available to scaffold followers. In game, support for followers is primarily based on the interest and availability of followers. In the case of nurturing others, 2F filled an unmet need of her In-game followers, which now requires her to be available to her guild members in- and out-of-game. Her in- and out-of-game experiences as one who nurtures followers is clearly evident and varies based on the resources made available.
Informant Profile: Director of Computer Programming

Informant 2M, a self-identified leader in- and out-of-game, he is a Director of Computer Programming for a Medical Startup Company and a World of Warcraft (WoW) guild officer for the 2MGFW (2M Guild Forum/Website). A male in his mid forties, he described his technical abilities as expert, and an everyday user of the Internet, but not social media. He plays in approximately 40+ hours in-game play per week and described his frequency as every day. His in-game avatar is a male, priest, and Worgen. He has played WoW for approximately 7 years and his main character for 4 years. A Director of Programming for a Medical Startup company is responsible for a team of programmers to maintain the technical operations of the company’s specialized medical service to doctors across the United States. As raid leader, guild leader, and class leader, his duties in-game range from recruiting, scheduling guild activities (raids and side quests), conflict resolution and discipline, including expulsion. His knowledge of player’s participation in past and current guilds (specifically with MMOs) can provide insight and patterns of in- and out-of-game leadership behaviors. Given guilds are built from the ground up, as with most businesses, his decision-making processes and lived experiences in the business sector (specially a startup) provide an interesting parallel between the in- and out-of-game environments. Within the framework of the four Transformational Leadership characteristics, the following sections will provide a detailed account of Informant 2M’s leadership experiences in- and out-of-game, community dialog found their public guild website and results of their leadership survey.

In-game leadership. During the in-game interview, informant 2M described a high number of instances in the characteristics pertaining to Idealized Influence, Stimulated Intelligence and Individualized Learning. Leaders who exhibit strength in these three characteristics is a visible leader who makes decisions based on data and communicates clear
expectations to his followers and takes their skills and abilities into consideration. The remaining characteristics of Inspirational Motivation will also be included to better understand the context of in- and out-of-game leadership. Within the context of in-game play and interaction with guild members, the following sections will describe 2M’s experiences, framed by Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** Within the transformational leadership characteristic of charisma, Informant 2M described a high number of leadership attributes consistent with four of the five sub-characteristics, which include Visible Leadership, Setting the Example, Decision Making, and Leader’s expectations. The sub-characteristic of Representing the Group was not described as frequently, but the informant provided an example.

*Visible leadership.* When describing the requirements of raid leadership, informant 2M indicated a key attribute to a raid leader is the ability to maintain and manage guild relationships. He further describes a raid groups in the following way, “Raid members have to be social. They have to be able to communicate constantly and then they have to know when to shut up.” Leaders must have the ability to manage this kind of interaction and must be present to provide direction and guidance before, during and after a raid activity.

*Setting the example.* 2M described an instance where he had to give a raid member’s slot (position in the raid) to another member, because the member did not complete the pre-raid assignments required for success in battle. He told the member “Everyone has to earn their slot, including me.” Indicating that everyone, had completed the assignments and as the leader could not allow the member to participate in the raid.
**Decision making.** When recruiting new members for a guild or raid, Informant 2M considers cultural fit to be an important factor above a player’s experience and abilities. “Not only do you have to consider their playing abilities and experience, but you also have to consider the cultural fit. Are you going to wish five minutes into a guild or raid that you did or didn’t invite them?” For 2M cultural fits is defined by how well the individual interacts and conforms to the social norms of the guild and its existing members. To determine how the new applicant may interact with veteran members, 2M interact and ask the applicant a series of very informal questions. However, he believes that sometimes, “you have to give people a chance.”

**Representing the group.** A raid leader for his guild, he often represents the leadership in when expelling a member from the guild or raid group. Highly sought after for the potential to receiving highly prized In-game rewards, the acceptance or denial of membership on a highly successful raid team can be a significant impact on guild members. In the event 2M feel the performance of a raid member does not meet the standards of the raid, he is obliged to expel the member from the group. ”I’m sorry your performance rating is really crappy were going to have to let you go.”

**Leader’s expectations.** Preparing raid members for the next In-game challenge, 2M provides the required tasks to be completed by every member of the raid party. Understanding that the tasks can be monotonous at times, the tasks are an important part of the raid’s success. “People would say… I want to be a good mentor and I would tell them you have to do this, and this and this …dailies. Yeah it’s a grind.” His expectations for followers are to complete the assigned tasks, which may be “a grind”, but are a requirement to participate in his raid group. Both leaders and raid members have an expectation of success if they are to complete tasks that are less than pleasant to accomplish.
**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** As a leader of a highly successful raid team, 2M describe how there is a cycle of participation in raid activities for the latest In-game rewards. Participation is highest during the introduction of an expansion and quickly tapers off once when a new one is introduced into the game. Because of this ebb and flow, raid leaders may be faced one day with turning away players from a waiting list to finding players with the requisite skills and experience to makeup a team. The examples provided in this section portray this contrast in player participation based on the introduction of new In-game material. As describe earlier, the instances for this characteristic was not significant but work bearing, especially in the sub-characteristic of Encouraging participation. Although the remaining three sub-categories did not rank as high, they do merit consideration when evaluated with data further in this paper.

**Alternative solutions.** This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to express alternative solutions to followers and his peer group. 2M did not describe any in-game examples that conform to Alternative Solutions.

**Encouraging participation.** In the example provided by informant 2M, he described the challenge of recruiting players to participate in a raid once the new expansion had been released. The task of coordinating 10 different calendars to facilitate attendance can be a challenge. 2M described his efforts in this way, “The recruitment effort, trying to get people to show up. The scheduling issues are not unlike a job.” To encourage participation in the raid, members are enticed with In-game rewards that can only be obtained if enough players can participate in the event, which makes scheduling and In-game persuasion very important.

**Connecting group values.** In the example provided by 2M describes the requirements for participation in a raid activity, which includes the completion of homework like tasks by
raid members. His expectations set by the group are high and individuals whose values are aligned with 2M typically do well in his group, but the opposite can also be said. “Once they find out about that (what it takes to be successful) people typically say, “Forget that!” and that’s a failure, but is it really?” For 2M the decision by a member to comply with the values and expectations set by the leader or the group does not change. If the member chooses not to comply, he does not participate in the raid activity.

Communicate performance. Feedback provided to followers by leaders before, during and after guild activities ensures members continue to be motivated and encouraged to participate. 2M described how a follower was violating social norms during group interactions by discussing inappropriate subject matter openly. 2M had to “tell them, “Okay… you can be you…but just not as much of you of you.” “Just bring it down a couple of notches!””

Insight through reflection. This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to express some In-game insight to followers and his peer group. 2M did not describe any in-game examples that provided insight through reflection.

Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). A guild and raid leader, who describes himself as a technical expert, 2M leverages logic and data solutions to enhance the performance of his team. Three sub-characteristics were described by informant 2M, transparency, data driven solutions, and continuous improvement. Although mentioned, the remaining characteristics will be included to provide a sense of In-game leadership context.

Transparency. In this example, 2M provided transparency in the process of raid member selection and assignment of duties and takes during In-game meetings. He was tasked with expelling a raid member from the team for not being properly prepared to participate. When the raid member was asked why he didn’t get the work done, he responded with “I didn’t
feel like it”. So, informant 2M transparently informed the expelled member he will not be joining the raid group. “I’m sorry but I’m giving your slot to someone else.” Then they’ll ask, who is it? I tell them I’m not going to tell you, because you’ll harangue them and say, “How dare you take my slot!” I would say, that’s not your slot, that’s A slot.” As a prerequisite for participation in raids, 2M provides “homework” they are to do on their own in preparation for an In-game challenge, failure to complete the assignment will mean that you will be left behind and your place taken by someone on the waiting list who did complete their assignment. During In-game meetings, he provides what he identifies as an action plan that is reviewed at the beginning, from the previous meeting; and at the end, which identifies what needs to be completed before the next meeting. “For meetings I like to have an action plan at the beginning and at the end of meetings. Just so everyone knows what’s going on and clear on what tasks need to be done and who’s doing them.” He also includes how he uses this technique in- and out-of-game.

Data driven solutions. One of his duties as a guild and raid leader includes the in scheduling and coordination of people and resources for In-game activities. 2M describe this duty in the following way, “So the scheduling of projects and people was a large part of my work.” This example describes how he gathers teams, their data and leaders together to collaboratively work towards a solution.

Continuous improvement. In this example 2M describes how members are motivated to improve themselves in an effort to earn a position in the raid group. “Given that some individuals did the work and they show up on time and consistently, they get to earn the slot.” By earning their position on the raid group, players are provided the opportunity to obtain special In-game rewards and interact with their successful raid team.
Culture of problem solving. This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to create a culture of problem solving to followers and his peer group. 2M did not describe any in-game examples that create such a culture.

Recommends strategies. The strategy 2M discussed in the In-game interview was weighing the work necessary to obtain in-game rewards with a future expansion that will make those rewards less effective or useless. “It can be a grind working killing all the bosses multiple times in order to get them to drop certain items and once you’ve obtained the items they wouldn’t be any good for the next expansion.” Given this 2M has to adjust his strategy to encourage participation, which includes offering In-game mounts.

Solutions on follower abilities. 2M spend a great deal of time looking for players with specific skill set and experience to accomplish In-game goals. He looks for players in specific sectors, such as technology that communicates effectively and has the temperament to work with a group. According to 2M he invites “people who have the right set of skills, mess well with the team and able to relay important information in a short amount of time.” By selecting followers with the necessary skills and abilities (i.e. healer or tank), he can form a successful team to overcome challenges in game.

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). Based on the number of examples provided, 2M’s In-game leadership characteristic of nurturing others is one of his strongest. Creating an environment where followers are supported and nurtured, he described examples in all four sub-characteristics, which show how he was nurturing of followers, considering their situation, connecting their individual’s values to the group, and listening to their individual needs.
Considering the situation. The example, provided by informant 2M, pertains to a new member’s application into the guild or acceptance raid group. Taking into consideration the follower’s personal situation, 2M makes every effort to provide opportunities to potential followers by providing creative participation into guild/raid activities or access to resources. “There’s not other way do to recruitment really, you have to give people a chance.” By providing an opportunity for new recruits to interact with veteran members, potential followers are provided an opportunity to develop, grow and gain acceptance with an In-game community.

Connecting individual values. With the introduction of an In-game expansion, the leader must work to connect the individual values to the values of the guild or raid member. 2M describe the dilemma and the solution in the following way. “There are times when you know there’s a new expansion coming, it becomes harder to get people together to obtain a piece of legendary gear that requires a lot of work and very little return. But there are mounts that you can get…” In this case, the group’s values of play have not changed, but the motivation of the In-game reward for the individual is different. To combat this change, guilds provides a special (sometime limited time) reward to members who participate in guild activities in the form of a special “mount” or In-game creature that can transport an avatar throughout the game. With player values changing, the group must provide in rewards to keep members engaged.

Nurturing followers. New under age MMO players at times become overwhelmed when interacting with such a diverse range of people within a guild. 2M are mindful of this difference and pays careful attention to the interaction between new guild members and veteran players. “We have to watch out for or help… because sometimes they get in over their head and they’re dealing with adults, who may not be too subtle when communicating with a diverse audience.” By providing a supportive and nurturing environment for all players, 2M can improve the
communication skills of his raid members, through a wide variety of experiences and social
interactions.

Followers needs. With regards to obtaining special In-game gear, 2M is mindful of the
needs of followers, providing opportunities for individuals to obtain these highly sought after
items. He believes that patience is the key to being a good leader. “You also have be patient
with guild members if you want to be a good leader. Its frustrating at times especially if you're
working towards obtaining special gear.” Special gear typically is the result of a successful In-
game challenge requiring the coordination of group.

Out-of-game leadership. As a leader in a medical startup, that provides the delivery of
technical and a medical service to doctors, 2M is a co-founder and technical arm of the
company. Although his team initially consisted of himself, it quickly grew into a team of 25
providing technical support for the company. Much like the formation of a guild, startup
companies being with a small core of founding members and quickly increase with each
success. As the company began to grow rapidly adding new employees at a tremendous rate,
2M described an interaction with the financial owners of the company and their interest in
promoting him to the highest technical management position in the company. “The business
owners would say, we’re growing and we’d like you to do this (run our technical division) for
us. I would say, “I don’t want to do it.” And they would say… but you’re our best choice. So,
I would say, “Ughh! Okay I’ll do it.”” Similar in context, guilds can be the subject of
tremendous growth and leaders selected from its founding membership. When asked to
describe his out-of-game environment, informant 2M brings us back to his In-game
environment and describing how closely related many of the situations he described out-of-
game are very similar to his In-game environment. Although the number of instances he
described was not as plentiful as his In-game examples, this was a similar pattern of frequency. This next section illustrates 2M’s out-of-game leadership experiences within the framework of Transformational Leadership’s four criterions, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** Only three out of the five leadership characteristics were described at the workplace of informant 2M. The three leadership sub-characteristics described by 2M Visible Leadership, Decision Making and Leader’s Expectations.

*Visible leadership.* As a leader for a startup company he described how his presence during the recruitment and interview process is necessary when selecting new employees. By asking new applicants a series of discipline specific questions pertaining to his field of expertise, he believes he can assess the performance of applicants in their environment.

“If performance assessment is big and you also devote a fair amount of time picking good people.” By picking the right people in the beginning and keeping them, he believes the organization, in our out-of-game, will perform better in the long run.

*Setting the example.* This sub-characteristic illustrates a leader's ability to provide followers with specific behaviors accepted as a social norm within a group. Aside from the in-game description of also working to keeping his raid leader slot, 2M did not describe any out-of-game examples where he set the example for his department.

*Decision making.* An out-of-game example pertaining to the application of 2M’s decision-making process came from his occasional need to fire an employee. In his statement, he struggled with the balancing the needs of the mission with the effectiveness of his team to accomplish their duties. “You may have the power to fire them but that’s going to hurt the mission of the group, the job, the quest, the raid. You tell yourself… okay I need this person; I
just need to get them to “tone it down.” The result is a compromise; allowing the individual to continue to stay in their current capacity if they conform to the standards of the group.

*Representing the group.* Aside from the in-game description of how he represented the leadership of the guild when expelling a member, 2M did not describe any examples where he represented himself or his team to external groups in and out of the workplace.

*Leader’s expectations.* 2M described an expectation of readings as part of an out-of-game discussion in the following way, “my expectations of players and employees are the same as well, if you expect employees to read your stuff before the meeting starts, you’re a fool.” To accommodate individuals who are not prepared, he allocates a modest amount of time at the beginning of every meeting to ensure everyone has read or reviewed the material for discussion, a practice he employs both in- and out-of-game.

*Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).* Out-of-game, informant 2M did not articulate any processes that described how he would persuade or motivate his employees towards a common goal. Given the startup’s rapid growth, the company may not have seen a need to persuade relatively new employees, but stay on top of the company’s business needs and not necessarily its employees. Another consideration is that informant 2M may not be a transformational leader but one who is transactional. In one example he explains how he “compensates” followers with an In-game reward for showing up.

*Alternative solutions.* Much like the In-game sub-characteristic, 2M did not describe any out-of-game example that portrays a leader's ability to express alternative solutions to followers and his peer group.

*Encouraging participation.* Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 2M did not describe any out-of-game example that encourages followers to engage in workplace goals and activities.
Connecting group values. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 2M did not describe any out-of-game example that encourages leaders to connect group values to followers in the workplace.

Communicate performance. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 2M did not describe any out-of-game example that provides feedback to followers before, during and after goals and activities.

Insight through reflection. Much like the In-game sub-characteristic, 2M did not describe any out-of-game examples where he used a story to persuade users to accomplish a specific goal or mission.

Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). Examples of out-of-game problem solving for 2M was not as significant. However, the sub-characteristics data driven solutions, and continuous improvement did have relatively higher instances, when compared to the overall the out-of-game examples. As a technical director in a startup company, he did describe how he leverages data and followers to move towards solutions that fulfill the mission of the department.

Transparency. At departmental meetings, 2M require an in meeting review of all action items and staff assignment, providing transparency of departmental tasks and activities. “For meetings I like to have an action plan at the beginning and at the end of meetings. Just so everyone knows what’s going on and clear on what tasks need to be done and who’s doing them.” By providing this level of transparency within his department, the work group can work collectively and collaboratively towards a common solution. This is also a process he developed In-game and also employs out-of-game to ensure everyone is on the same page.
Data driven solutions. As described in the In-game section, informant 2M schedules projects and people into a meeting for the purpose of developing creative, data driven solutions. “So the scheduling of projects and people was a large part of my work… which incidentally is an example of something I did in the real world that I applied in game. Informant 2M makes a connection of in- and out-of-game behaviors, which in this case is also a sub-characteristic of leaders.

Continuous improvement. With an opportunity to grow and improve, 2M provide followers the necessary scaffolding for followers to obtain workplace experiences from various projects in his area. He does this by making them feel like the boss, “give them autonomy and allow them to make the call on things.” Through these workplace experiences, his followers develop the confidence to tackle increasingly challenging projects and improve their skills.

Culture of problem solving. In the context of his out-of-game workplace environment, 2M did not describe any examples where he presented participated or created a culture of problem solving.

Recommends strategies. In the previous example of continuous improvement, it also shows how 2M use this as a strategy. “Depending on the sector you may find companies that have a flexible schedule, respectful, make them feel like the thing, give them autonomy and allow them to make the call on things.” It displays how individuals from his sector (Technology) have expectations for improvement. Therefore 2M’s strategy to keep them engaged is by providing them scaffolded opportunities for improvement in the workplace.

Solutions on follower abilities. Finding followers with appropriate skills and abilities In-game is also a characteristic 2M exhibits out-of-game. In his workplace environment he looks specifically for applicants who have the right combination of technical and people skills.
“I’m constantly on the look out for talent. Some people say, “you can’t buy intelligence, but you can rent it.” At a minimum, yes. Especially in my profession, because they can be really good technical people but have horrible social skills. So when you meet people who have the right set of social and technical skills, you fall in love.”

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). 2M did not articulate many examples where he had an opportunity to nurture or develop members of his team. In the technology sector in which he is employed, there is a high turnover rate for employees. 2M have had some success providing opportunities to nurture and retain existing employees. In the examples below, he describes how he is considerate of the situation and connects individual values to the group.

Considering the situation. The example provided by 2M describes a concept he calls the “old shoe shuffle”, which provides followers an opportunity to catch up on a reading assignment at the beginning of a meeting. Essentially a stalling tactic, 2M provides time at the beginning of a meeting for followers who were not able to complete a reading assignment due to a personal or professional situation. He describes the tactic and its purpose in this way, “I do the “old shoe shuffle” to buy them enough time (5-15mins) to get up to speed and start contributing.”

Connecting individual values. In the context of his out-of-game workplace environment, 2M discussed the importance of retention of employees. “Retention is also important. Sure getting them to show up and on time is important, but also getting them to keep coming back (retaining them) is also equally important. It has to be fun, it has to be organized.” According to informant 2M, some the values employees look for in their out-of-game environment is fun and organized.
Nurturing followers. In the context of his out-of-game workplace environment, 2M did not describe any examples where he presented participated or created a culture of problem solving.

Followers needs. In the context of his out-of-game workplace environment, 2M did not describe any examples where he specifically listened to a follower’s individual needs and aligned it with the group.

Figure 35. 2MGFW guild header with welcome message

The guild forum/website: the 2MGFW. Utilizing the Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics from Chapter 3, this section will explore and evaluate informant 2M’s guild website for the four transformational leadership characteristics Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. A mixture of text and images this section will provide a public view of informant 2M’s guild events and activities around the framework of transformational leadership.

2MGFW: charisma. The 2MGFW supports evidence of Idealized Influence by providing a complete list of guild officer, who set the standards of the guild. In this guilds case there is one Guild Master, Master Chief and six guild officers. With each officer plays a role in the operations of the guild; the guild master maintains the primary direction of the guild.
Decided upon collaboratively by guild officers, rules that govern the social norms of the guild are also posted on the 2MGFW website for new and veteran players.

The information and guidelines listed in the range from “Have fun” to a player’s out-of-game environment. A leader’s expectations of players and their role in the guild are also clearly defined by the guild’s guidelines.
**2MGFW: inspiring others.** Evidence, which encouraged the participation of members, in guild activities were found throughout the 2MGFW. At the main guild page was a calendar of activities, which encouraged participation of raid activities. Essentially, if you have time to participate the guild website, offered these dates/times.

![2MGFW guild calendar](image)

**Figure 39. 2MGFW guild calendar**

Given its location on the guild website, 2MGFW values its ranking in the World of Warcraft. Therefore, the guild prominently posts its rankings on the page to help encourage members to participate,
raid history (to communicate its performance),

and snapshot of the next In-game challenge.

All of these examples are designed to inspire and motivate players into participation.
**2MGFW: collaborating towards a solution.** To create a collaborative environment that provides and utilizes data driven solutions. The 2MGFW website offers a great deal of transparency with the selection of raid teams. The image below provides the specific list of players who have earned positions on each raid team as well as the requirements they’ve met.

![Figure 43. 2MGFW raid teams](image)

Players also have access to a variety of tools to improve their In-game abilities, through data driven third party apps like Ask Mr Robot or Guild Ox.

![Figure 44. 2MGFW online tools](image)

There is also a culture of problem solving in 2MGFW website evident from the multiple posts/discussions on their forums. Most notably, there is a great deal of discussion regarding strategies and tactical recommendations found in their online forums.
**2MGFW: nurturing others.** When nurturing guild members, a number of different options were also evident on the 2MGFW website. Interesting, the guild rules take into account the guild member’s out-of-game experience. Under Guild Guidelines, #2 states:

> Real life matters are more important, please make this a priority over gaming! We will accommodate situations where real life will interfere with gaming and work with you as needed. Do not fear repercussion for living life and handling responsibilities.

This guild is certainly sensitive to the needs of its followers both in- and out-of-game. It also connects the values of the individual to the values of the group by sharing a variety informal out-of-game discussions and birthdays.
The topics presented in these forums or birthdays create a supporting and nurturing environment where players develop relationships built in game.

**The survey: informant 2M.** As described in Chapter 3 of Phase II, Questionnaire informant 2M complete an online survey of their perceived transformational leadership style, measuring the four traits of Idealized Influence or Charisma (IN), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). A computer programming professional with high Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration would communicate high expectations to followers and provide an environment that is supportive of followers needs. Leaders who have these two traits value follower feedback and provide multiple opportunities for followers to participate in-group activities that are both “fun and organized”. Given that the two top characteristics are scored equally, they are perceived to be interchangeable and a very important part of the leaders perception of success in the community. The online survey closely measures these four characteristics. Called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the survey consists of 43 questions using a 5 point frequency Likert scale (0 = *Not at all*, 1 = *Once in a while*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *Fairly Often*, 4 = *Frequently, if not always*). Once completed the results are tabulated and sent to the researcher for evaluation. Displayed below is the result of informant 2M’s MLQ survey.

Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Idealized Influence (IN)</th>
<th>Inspirational Motivation (IM)</th>
<th>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</th>
<th>Individual Consideration (IC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2M</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This information indicates informant 2M perceives himself as a leader with the following traits (in order of frequency):

- Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration (most frequent)
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Idealized Influence (least frequent)

**Leadership relationships among interview, website and survey.** Combining 2M’s interview, website and leadership survey, we see an interplay between his in- and out-of-game leadership roles, as guild officer and a technology leader for a medical startup company. To understanding the lived leadership experience in- and out-of-games, we must understand how informant 2M perceives himself, how this community scaffolds his perceptions as a leader and how the transformational leadership experiences manifest themselves across similar contexts in an out-of-game.

A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was taken by informant 2M and assess him to perceive himself as one who Inspires (Inspirational Motivation) and Nurtures Others (Individualized Consideration). As described in the previous section (The survey: informant 2M), 2M received scores ranking in highest frequency (highest to lowest) in the following order Inspirational Motivation, Individualized Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, and Idealized Influence. Informant 2M perceives himself as leader who creates a nurturing environment for followers who is mindful of their needs and provides opportunities of engagement and participation that are fun and organized.

The guild can act as a platform to scaffold the needs of its members and leadership. Earlier in this section titled “Guild Forum/Website:2MGFW”, 2M’s guild websites displayed transformational leadership resources in support of its community. Aside from a complete list
of all guild officers, a written standard of for guild conduct and social norms (Idealized Influence) was provided on the guild website, which consisted the “Guild Guidelines” and rules for guild leadership. In an effort to inspire others (Inspirational Motivation), four features of the website encouraged participation (raid calendar), connected the group values to the individual (guild ranking), the communication of raid team performance (raid history) and provide strategic discussion/reflection of the next in-game challenge. Three examples of guild members collaborating towards a solution (Intellectual Stimulation) offered tools that would provide continuous improvement to followers, create a culture of problem solving through guild forums and allow followers and leaders alike the opportunity to recommend strategies during game play. In a forum titled raid tactics, a variety of information ranging from written explanations to videos are provided to provide player the opportunity to understand the challenge faced by the team. The guild website portrays a nurturing environment that is mindful of the needs of its members, both in- and out-of-game (Individualized Consideration). It clearly states that guild members should have their out-of-game life take priority over their In-game responsibilities. Certainly this aligns well with 2M’s perception of his leadership abilities in game.

*Considering the Situation* of followers is a leadership sub-characteristic that can be seen across similar context in- and out-of-game. For meeting or discussion in or out-of-game, 2M has an expectation to prepare for followers who do not always read their “homework assignment” prior to the beginning of the meeting. Preparing for situations where followers to not accomplish a task due to an external factor, 2M has developed a number of safeguards to ensure the failure of one does not affect the needs of the whole. The first is the allocation of additional amount of time. In the examples pertaining to the “old shoe shuffle”, he uses this stalling technique at the beginning of meetings, in- and out-of-game, to encourage followers to
complete their “homework” and greater participation by all members in raid or guild dialog. As the guild leader, he is interested in the needs of his members in- and out-of-game by encouraging member to be engaged with their out-of-game life and responsibilities. Within the framework of Transformational Leadership characteristics, the experience of safeguarding the needs of the group can illustrated in the following way:

- **Individualized Consideration**: Considers the needs of followers by employing processes like the “old shoe shuffle” to provide additional time for members to complete a given task and developing policies that place equal importance on member responsibilities out-of-game.

- **Inspirational Motivation**: Encourages the participation in guild events based on out-of-game responsibilities without fear of repercussions.

Informant 2M was described by the MLQ survey to have the strongest characteristics of individualized consideration and inspirational motivation, which motivates players to participate in a nurturing and supportive environment. We did see some parallels between his in- and out-of-game experiences which showed examples coinciding with the transformational characteristic of *Nurturing Others*. In alignment with his leadership, the guild website contained a statement which put the out-of-game needs of followers ahead of the In-game community. By creating a nurturing environment for his followers, in an out-of-game, 2M create opportunities of engagement that are fun and organized, and mindful of the needs of followers.

**Informant Profile: Education Technology Professional**

Informant 3M, a self-identified leader in- and out-of-game, he is an education technology researcher, and a World of Warcraft (WoW) guild leader for the 3MGFW (3M Guild Forum/Website). A male in his forties, he described his technical abilities as expert, and
perpetually connected to the Internet and social media. At the peak of his involvement, he played approximately 60 or more hours per week in gameplay and describes his frequency as every day. His in-game avatar is a male, rogue and Orc. He has played WoW in a variety of positions from leader, officer and member until he left the game in 2010. A former education technology developer and current researcher, he managed as many three staff employees in his career in the public sector. As guild leader and officer his duties in-game ranged from recruiting and conflict resolution. His in-game knowledge and experience as the founder of a social guild and education technology professional can provide insight and patterns of leadership characteristics. Although guilds are social in nature, 3M was the co-founder of a guild whose primary focus was social, in contrast to hardcore guilds. In a world where hierarchical leadership models are the norm, his decision making processes that lead to the formation and active participation of a very flat and democratic style will provide insight on the lived experiences of leaders in- and out-of-game. Within the framework of the four Transformational Leadership characteristics, the following sections will provide a detailed account of Informant 3M’s leadership experiences in- and out-of-game, community dialog found their public guild website and results of their leadership survey.

**In-game leadership.** During the in-game interview, informant 3M described instances primarily characterized as Idealized Influence and individualized consideration. Leaders, who exhibit strength in these two characteristics, are charismatic and have a focus on nurturing others. In game, he can be described as visible leader whose actions reflect the standards of their community, creates a supportive guild environment and listens to the needs of his followers. As a founding member and having written most of the rules of the guild, 3M expects followers to adhere to the groups standards and social norms. With his primary role as guild
leader, he works closely with his co-founders to resolve issues and govern a very flat and
democratic social guild. The remaining characteristics of Inspirational Motivation and
Intellectual Stimulation will also be included to better understand the context of his in- and out-
of-game leadership. Within the context of in-game play and interaction with guild members,
the following sections will describe 3M’s experiences, framed by Idealized Influence,
Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

Charisma (idealized influence). Described as a characteristic that portrays to followers
high standards of moral and ethical conduct, Informant 3M provided multiple examples
pertaining to every sub-characteristic. With the highest number of instances described in the
following order from highest to lowest, Decision Making, Setting the Example, Leader’s
Expectations, Visible Leadership and Representing the group.

Visible leadership. As the guild leader and a member of the core group, 3M worked
very hard to ensure that everyone had a say. His presence as a visible leader helped remind
everyone of that standard. “We (the core members) kept emphasizing that we in would keep
discussing everything and any important decision would be open to everyone. So the
management structure of the guild was very democratic, very flat.”

Setting the example. Using themselves as the examples in the recruitment process of the
guild, 3M and the core members created an application process that would encourage specific
attributes for new members. “I lot of our values were expressed in that application process. So
we created a questionnaire that everyone would fill out to be accepted into our guild.” By
creating a template for future members, the process would diminish the likelihood of conflict,
which didn’t always happen.
**Decision making.** In this example, 3M discussed his decision for stepping down from his position as guild leader. Due to external factors, he could not meet the high standard of service he put upon himself, requiring him to step down as guild leader. “It takes a lot of time to manage guild issues. If someone had sent me an email it would take me a day or so get back to them and I thought that wasn’t fair to them.” As a leader he showed a great deal of ethics by choosing to do what’s best for the community.

**Representing the group.** The example provided by 3M highlights how he represented one fifth of the guild leadership. Although he held the title of guild leader, he insisted on complete transparency and democracy. He expressed his desire for the final word in this way, “people would come in saying that I would have the final word, as a leader, even though I didn’t want the final word. It was more of a council; we called ourselves “the five officers.” Given this, it is understandable that this sub-characteristic was not described frequently in the interview.

**Leader’s expectations.** As a social guild, the leader’s expectations for followers are very relaxed. “It was a guild you could join where you lay back and have a place to hang out and talk to people as you were leveling up.” By identifying the laid back atmosphere and description of acceptable behaviors, followers identify with acceptable norms and standards within the guild.

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** As a leader of a successful social guild, the need to persuade or motivate was not always necessary. There were a number of examples provided by 3M, which conformed to the sub-characteristics listed below specifically *Encouraging Participation, Connecting Group Values, Communicate Performance and Insight through Reflection*.
Alternative solutions. This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to provide alternative solutions to followers in an effort to encourage participation in guild activities. 3M did not describe any in-game examples that provided Alternative Solutions.

Encouraging participation. 3M provided an example where groups were formed organically or through a signup sheet to encouraged participation in-group activities. “We have a signup sheet on the guild website and any time you needed help someone was there to help and sign up.” Coming from the alignment of out-of-game schedules, group participation was often spontaneous; couples who play in game; individual’s who leave work at the same time were at the core of these groups. “We had couples that would be in the game together. They’re schedules match up in real life so there’s already two people in a party right there.”

Connecting group values. Informant 3M described how the group values, help shape the application process for new members. “So we would frame it (in our application process)… this is what we are and then the question.” Through this process new applicants are introduced to the values of the guild and based on their responses, the guild leadership could determine if their personal values are aligned with that of the guild.

Communicate performance. In this example captures 3M’s response to a new guild member when invited to attend a guild activity. “We’d say… no it doesn’t matter. You should come and join us!” A social guild 3M assured the player that there was greater importance in developing relationships, than in-game performance.

Insight through reflection. This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to express some in-game insight to followers and his peer group. In this example, 3M provides an opportunity for reflection to a soon to be former member, explaining why he is being expelled from the guild. “You know what, we’ve been trying to talk and reason with you. I understand
your position and it makes a lot of sense. Most of the guild disagreed. We’re kicking you out not because we disagree with you. We disagree with how you treat us.“ By providing this insight and opportunity to reflect, the player may learn from his experience prior to joining another guild.

Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). Initially, there was not a large need to utilize online tools to improve In-game gear. As described by 3M a subset of the guild became interested in theorycrafting, explained further under the sub characteristic continuous improvement. 3MGFW saw the use of online tools as a way to enhance their overall social experience. Described below are leadership examples relevant to the sub characteristics described as transparency, data driven solutions, continuous improvement and Culture of problem solving.

Transparency. This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to create transparency with followers and his peer group. “An we (the core members) kept emphasizing that we in would keep discussing everything and any important decision would be open to everyone.” 3M describe how the communication between all the core and regular members made all decisions open.

Data driven solutions. 3M described how a guild member was trying to use data to receive an In-game reward (loot). "He was like… yeah but the shield isn’t better than the tank’s existing shield. Sure it’s a little bit better… but it would be a massive improvement for me." Although 3M understood why the requester wanted the reward, he was denied his request, not because of his argument, but how he argued for his cause. “He was very inflammatory, defensive and he attacked and insulted everyone in the guild. It just wasn’t civil. Even though his ideas were perfectly fine. His style of argument didn’t fit with the guild.”
*Continuous improvement.* 3M described two groups of theorycrafters within 3MGFW who were leveraging online tools to improve In-game experience. The difference between those groups was in the speed or the constraints employed. “We had some people that were really focused on maximizing damage, (but) it was within certain constraints. We could see that someone’s gear just wasn’t that good. So we would try to figure out what we could do about that without making him feel completely deficient.”

*Culture of problem solving.* The example provided by 3M portrayed a culture of problem solving towards in game progress. Member actively recruited followers willing to engage in theorycrafting. “[We] tried to maximize our efficiency at the same time being new to it. We were looking for people who may not know about [theorycrafting] but were open to it.” With the culture of theorycrafting taking root, the guild shifted its focus to a more nurturing environment instead of outright progress of in game challenges. The group whose theorycrafting culture revolved around performance fell apart. “It was impatient and wasn’t willing to wait for people to get better. So that raid group died.” In contrast, 3M’s nurturing raid group continued to be successful. “My guild raiding was very healthy because it was all about nurturing and learning the game together.” The foundation of nurture verses progress played a key role in the success or failure of the two groups. The successful group consisted of guild members whose values were aligned with the guild. Although the failed group shared a culture of problem solving similar to 3M’s group, their group did not have the benefit of members whose values were aligned to an environment of nurturing.

*Recommends strategies.* This sub-characteristic portrays a leader's ability to recommend strategies to followers and his peer group. 3M did not describe any in-game examples that displayed this characteristic.
Solutions on follower abilities. This sub-characteristic portrays a leader’s ability to create identifiable solutions based on a combination of follower or followers skills and abilities. 3M did not describe any in-game examples that displayed this characteristic.

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). Informant 3M provided examples for all four transformational leadership sub-characteristics. As the mentor and leader to new members, he showed consideration toward their situation, connected their individual values to that of the guild, and nurtured new followers and their needs.

Considering the situation. The example provided by 3M pertains to the denial of acceptance into the guild after a trial period. Although acceptance into the guild was not obtained, 3M is considerate of the followers situation by providing alternative guilds more aligned with their values and goals of the applicant. 3M would say, “I don’t think you’re quite right for us or were not quite right for you, so these other guilds might be better for you.”

Connecting individual values. The example provided, illustrates how 3M was part of a group of individuals whose values shaped and ultimately formed a nurturing and supportive guild environment. “We all sort of knew we wanted a flat and democratic guild, but at the same time I was reading Kollock and Smith about sustainable online communities, and what was needed for them. Things like every member of the community have a say in how the community should be governed. I had just read the article when we just formed the guild. I knew we wanted that.” Through the group’s collaboration, they formed the social guild, 3MGFW.

Nurturing followers. 3M’s example describes a culture, where veteran members scaffolded new players. “If there’s a new player who didn’t know how to play or where
uncomfortable, there would be class players that would be willing to help out the new player through chat.” Players shared experiences that benefited all participants.

*Followers needs.* 3M’s decision to step down from a leadership role is a testament to his sensitivity to the needs of the guild and its membership. “When the officers started to not play as often, me and one other officer, decided to step down and we elevated a couple of elders into the officer role.” By identifying suitable replacements for leadership 3M ensures the success of the guild and its followers.

*Out-of-game leadership.* An education technology professional, he and his team had worked with an educational institution to develop educational exhibits typically found in a museum. Informant 3M worked with a team of three employees who worked together in a flat and democratic team style. In his role, he was responsible for the budget and timeline for every project. “One of the guys might say… it would be great if we could do this or this and I would be the one to say, I don’t think we could do that and in that sense I enforced the constraint to each project. We equally brainstormed and come up with solutions. But I was the guy that would say… we can’t do that.” To his credit, informant always made a deadline and never went over budget. Compared to the In-game examples described by 3M, the frequency and instances of leadership were not as high. However, it is important to make note of any patterns, lived experiences and context in which leadership characteristics were evident in- and out-of-game. This next section illustrates 3M’s out-of-game leadership experiences within the framework of Transformational Leadership’s four criterions, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.
Charisma (idealized influence). Much like the In-game examples, Informant 3M provided an example of the five leadership sub-characteristics with three described prominently, specifically Visible Leadership, Decision Making, and Representing the Group.

Visible leadership. 3M success as a leader within his team is to act as the voice that truly knows the constraints of the team and the project. Without his leadership, the group would have missed their established timelines and budget allocations. As described earlier, “One of the guys might say… it would be great if we could do this or this and I would be the one to say, I don’t think we could do that and in that sense I enforced the constraint to each project.”

Setting the example. As the leader of his team, he would encourage members to speak with him to find a resolution with issues in the workplace or rant. “They would rant at me because I was a leader and I’m okay with that.” One of the largest duties of a leader is listening and 3M made himself available for his team.

Decision making. The example provided by 3M is advice to a new team member on the high standards of communication between the team and external department, essentially. “Pass things through me before you mouth off. Don’t be confrontational without being constructive. Don’t do anything stupid. Before you do anything should talk to me.” By sharing this decision making process with his team member he can ensure the group will avoid conflict with upper management.

Representing the group. In the workplace and representing interests outside of the two conflicting parties, 3M would mediate between two groups or individuals. “I can mediate. This is how their feeling. I would explain to the parties how each one was feeling and I can do that outside of the game now because of this practice in game.”
Leader's expectations. Being identified as a leader, you must be guided by your moral and ethical beliefs to make those decisions because followers will have that expectation of you. “The incoming expectation is that there is a leader and that person is expected to take on certain responsibilities even if they don’t think they’re the leader.”

Inspiring others (inspirational motivation). Informant 3M did not provide any examples of this transformational leadership characteristic. Working in a highly dynamic and self-motivated team, his out-of-game leadership role did not require this characteristic given the context of his environment.

Alternative solutions. Much like the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game example that portrays a leader's ability to express alternative solutions to followers and his peer group.

Encouraging participation. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game example that encourages followers to engage in workplace goals and activities.

Connecting group values. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game example that encourages leaders to connect group values to followers in the workplace.

Communicate performance. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game example that provides feedback to followers before, during and after goals and activities.

Insight through reflection. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game examples where he used a story to persuade users to accomplish a specific goal or mission.
Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). 3M and his team shared a common space, which made collaboration and the utilization of data based solutions commonplace. “We all shared an office, and if an issue came up, we would just turn around and I think part of it was because we were such a small team, we could hammer out the issues rather quickly.” It is because of this workplace arrangement there was little or no mention of the leadership characteristics because they were all assumed practices. In an effort to document the contexts out-of-game, examples of those contexts are found in the sub-characteristics of transparency, data driven solutions, culture of problem solving and Recommends strategies.

Transparency. As described earlier, 3M’s team shared a common office space, which made all decisions; problems and solutions open to everyone.

Data driven solutions. As described earlier, 3M’s team shared a common office space, which meant all the experts were in one location to share appropriate data, resources and/or ideas. This allowed the team to come to a solution very quickly.

Continuous improvement. Unlike the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game examples where he led his team to continuously improve their skill set and/or abilities.

Culture of problem solving. The example provided by 3M illustrates how his team works collectively and collaboratively to strategically resolve a workplace challenge. “Sometimes someone would get stuck and one or all of us would come up with possible solutions or work together to address the issue. Maybe try this or this.” As experts in their respective areas and sharing the same workspace, they were able to come to a conclusion or debrief a situation very quickly.
Recommends strategies. Like the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game example that recommends strategies to followers.

Solutions on follower abilities. Like the In-game sub-characteristic, 3M did not describe any out-of-game example that recommends strategies to followers. All team members were highly motivated and utilized their respective abilities in support of the agreed upon solution.

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). As depicted earlier, 3M’s team shared a common workspace, friendships and its size contributed to its success in this area. “We all knew each other very well and we were all good friends. The type of work environment was conducive to good communication. We all shared an office, and if an issue came up, we would just turn around and I think part of it was because we were such a small team, we could hammer out the issues rather quickly.” 3M did not provide many examples any leadership characteristics because of the team’s ability to nurture each other. So integrally connected were the members of the team, that their collaborative environment nurtured the needs of each individual.

Considering the situation. Given their unique workplace environment, 3M did not articulate any out-of-game examples where he considered the follower’s situation.

Connecting individual values. Given their unique workplace environment, 3M did not communicate any out-of-game examples where he connected a team member’s values to the values of the group.

Nurturing followers. Given their unique workplace environment, 3M did not communicate any out-of-game examples where he nurtured members of his team.
Followers needs. In the context of his out-of-game workplace environment, 3M did say that because of his In-game experiences with followers. He has developed a level of tolerance when interacting with individuals or groups who are in conflict. “I'm much more tolerant now and more willing to hear what people have to say, especially if there’s a conflict. The game helped me develop that tolerance.”

Figure 48. 3MGFW guild header with expansion focus and humor

The guild forum/website: the 3MGFW. Utilizing the Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics from Chapter 3, this section will explore and evaluate informant 3M’s guild website for the four transformational leadership characteristics Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. Although 3M had been a member of other guilds, the information captured here was from his time at 3MGFW. Unfortunately, it was a number of years since he had been guild leader and his guild was long in existence since the time of this study. Therefore, the Internet Archive:WayBackMachine (https://archive.org/web/) was used to gather website information from the now unavailable website. The following is information is a mixture of text and images from 3MGFW within the date range spanning February 12th, 2005
to January 8th, 2011. This section will provide a public view of informant 3M’s guild events and activities around the framework of transformational leadership.

**3MGFW: charisma.** Although incomplete, the 3MGFW supports evidence of Idealized Influence by providing a link to the guild’s guidelines and rules. Unfortunately, no specifics are available regarding the website. Had 3M provided specific information regarding the website, it would have also been included in this section of the profile.

![Guild Etiquette](image)

*Figure 49. 3MGFW guild etiquette*

**3MGFW: inspiring others.** Evidence, which encouraged the participant of members in guild activities, was found throughout the 3MGFW. At the main guild page was a calendar of activities, which encouraged participation of raid activities. Essentially, if you have time to participate the guild website, offered these dates/times, including birthdates.

![Calendar](image)

*Figure 50. 3MGFW guild calendar*

Given its location on the guild website, 3MGFW values its ranking in the World of Warcraft. Therefore, the guild prominently posts its rankings on the page to help encourage members to participate, raid history (to communicate its performance) and snapshot of the next In-game challenge. All of these examples are designed to inspire and motivate players into participation.
3MGFW: collaborating towards a solution. To create a collaborative environment that provides and utilizes data driven solutions. The 3MGFW website offers a great deal of transparency with the selection of raid teams. The image below provides the specific list of players who have earned positions on each raid team as well as the requirements they’ve met.

Players also have access to a variety of tools to improve their In-game abilities, through data driven third party apps like WOWDB (World Of Warcraft Data Base).
Guild members are also encouraged to improve themselves and learn new strategies in a number of ways, by visiting Gadgetzan or The Arena.

There is also a culture of problem solving on 3MGFW website that allows leaders and members alike to learn from an understand each other’s skills and abilities. This discussion is called “Character Specs”
3MGFW: nurturing others. All four transformational leadership sub-characteristics were evident on the guild website. The 3MGFW was Considerate of the Follower’s Situation by providing an option to submit suggestions and voice “off-topic” comments relevant to a player’s “real life”.

The website also Connected an Individual Values and Followers Needs by providing a forum from which members can share character/avatar biographies, including their values and goals; share Campfire stories/Screenshots which may be reflective and thoughtful to the needs of followers.
Given the very flat and democratic nature of the guild, leaders and the community can potentially nurture each other by sharing and leveraging skills and abilities for the benefit of the group. This information can be found in their discussion link, Character Specs.

Figure 59. 3MGFW forum character specs (2)

The survey: informant 3M. As described in Chapter 3 of Phase II, Questionnaire informant 3M complete an online survey of their perceived transformational leadership style, measuring the four traits of Idealized Influence or Charisma (IN), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). An education technology professional with high Individualized Consideration, he provides an environment that is supportive of followers needs. The support could come in the form of access to training, tools and/or communities that would improve the follower’s skills and or abilities. Leaders with this nurturing characteristic would create a supportive environment for followers, be willing to listen to their needs and make excellent mentors. Since the remaining three characteristics are scored equally, they are perceived to be interchangeable, placing greater significance on nurturing others. Called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the survey consists of 43 questions using a 5 point frequency Likert scale (0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Frequently, if not always). Once completed the results are tabulated and sent to the researcher for evaluation. Displayed below is the result of informant 3M’s MLQ survey.
Table 10.

**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Data: Informant 3M**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Idealized Influence (IN)</th>
<th>Inspirational Motivation (IM)</th>
<th>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</th>
<th>Individual Consideration (IC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3M</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information indicates informant 3M perceives himself as a leader with the following traits (in order of frequency):

- Individualized Consideration (most frequent)
- Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, and Intellectual Stimulation (least frequent)

**Leadership relationships among interview, website and survey.** Combining 3M’s interview, website and leadership survey, we see an interplay between his in- and out-of-game leadership roles, as guild officer and education technology leader. To understanding the lived leadership experience in- and out-of-games, we must understand how informant 3M perceives himself, how this community scaffolds his perceptions as a leader and how the transformational leadership experiences manifest themselves across similar contexts in an out-of-game.

A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was taken by informant 3M and assessed him as perceiving himself one who Nurtures Others (Individualized Consideration). As described in the previous section (The survey: informant 3M), 3M received scores ranking individualized consideration as the highest frequency with the remaining three characteristics scored equally. Identifying him as a leader who’s greatest characteristic is the nurturing of followers. It certainly corresponds to his in- and out-of-game role as mentor/leader of a very social, democratic and flat leadership structure.
3M’s in- and out-of-game communities provide a variety of resources to support followers. Out-of-game, 3M’s followers have a variety of workplace resources and team to support their personal and professional goals. Because of the team size and common workplace 3M’s out-of-game environment was nurturing, collaborative and contained a highly effective community of professionals. In game, resources for guild members include tools that measure performance, evaluate gear, and a theorycrafting community. Although the websites is no longer available and found only on the “Waybackmachine”, there was evidence of all four transformational leadership characteristics on the guild website, described in the previous section “Guild Forum/Website:3MGFW”.

3M’s leadership characteristics favors a highly nurturing and follower centered environment consistent to both in- and out-of-game environment. Out-of-game, 3M participated and encourage a very flat and democratic environment, preferring a team structure as opposed to a hierarchical structure. When an opportunity was provided to create an In-game hierarchical structure, it was abandoned that concept for a very flat and democratic leadership represented by “The Five Officers”. As described further in the survey, the remaining three characteristics (Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Idealized Influence) are perceived to be equally important in the eyes of informant 3M. The remaining three characteristics may be interchangeable and employed given the environment and context of the informant’s leadership within the community. Nurturing a democratic and flat infrastructure was found in- and out-of-game and in each sub characteristic of 3M’s leadership. In- and out-of-game 3M provided the example and expectations for followers to scaffold players. “If there’s a new player who didn’t know how to play or was uncomfortable, there would be class players that would be willing to help out the new player through chat. These mentors would
give out specific tips prior to the beginning of the fight to newbies. We did that a lot and I thought that (mentors and class leaders) was really great about our guild and how we helped out new players in the guild raids.” (Idealized Influence/Individualized Consideration) With an introduction into of a flat and democratic structure in the workplace, literature and articles further confirmed and scaffolded the idea for a guild. “I knew we wanted that (a democratic structure), but here’s some literature that actually backed up our ideas. It not like my workplace leadership was bleeding in; but I think it was the academic literature, I was reading at the time that bled in. I was studying social dilemmas, like how do you encourage collaborative behavior and how we create a sustainable community that nurtures.” With a focus on continuous improvement and data based solutions, 3M created a supportive environment where all members were free to collaborate and work together to identify and implement solutions (Intellectual Stimulation/Individualized Consideration). Within the framework of Transformational Leadership characteristics, the experience of overcoming a challenge can be illustrated in the following way:

- **Idealized Influence**: Acted as an example for new and veteran members to create a nurturing environment

- **Intellectual Stimulation**: Leveraging both in- and out-of-game resources, 3M collaborated with followers to create a culture of problem solving and improvement.

- **Individualized Consideration**: 3M’s desire to nurture others in a democratic and flat leadership structure.

3M gravitate toward the creation or participation in a highly democratic and flat leadership structures. Out-of-game organizations with resources and highly motivated followers may diminish the need for other leadership characteristics, 3M ensures the foundation
of nurturing others is a part of the institutional culture. In game, 3M have created an
environment and followership that values community, nurturing the needs and abilities of
followers.

**Informant Profile: Senior Manager and Content Strategist**

Informant 4M, a self-identified leader in- and out-of-game, he is Software Manager and
Content Strategist with a global software company, and World of Warcraft (WoW) guild leader
for the 4MGFW (4M Guild Forum/Website). He described his technical abilities as proficient,
and an everyday user of the Internet, blogs, and social media. He plays approximately 60 or
more hours In-game play and describes his frequency as every day. His in-game avatar is a
male, paladin and Human. He has played WoW for approximately nine years and his main
character for all nine years. In his out-of-game role he has managed three to eight software
technology professionals who coordinated the efforts of twenty partner teams consisting of
approximately two hundred company employees. As guild leader and officer his duties In-game
ranged from recruiting, and conflict resolution. His knowledge and experience as the founder of
a social guild and out-of-game leadership experiences with some of the world’s largest software
companies can provide insight and patterns of transformational leadership characteristics. A
founder of a very social and close-knit community of players, 4M co-founded a World of
Warcraft guild with his spouse; where they communicate almost exclusively via Facebook. In
both in- and out-of-game 4M has provided a significant number of examples that identifies him
as a nurturing leader who communicates and bases decisions on his high personal standards to
his followers. Within the framework of the four Transformational Leadership characteristics,
the following sections will provide a detailed account of Informant 4M’s leadership experiences
in- and out-of-game, community dialog found their public guild website and results of their
leadership survey.
**In-game leadership.** During the in-game interview, informant 4M described instances primarily characterized as Idealized Influence and individualized consideration. Leaders, who exhibit strength in these two characteristics, are charismatic and have a focus on nurturing others. In game, he can be described as a leader whose decisions reflect and communicate the high standards of their community and creates a supportive guild environment for his followers. “My primary role is that of raid leader and that’s basically understanding the strategy for winning the fight against the bosses and talking people through their roles during the action.”

The remaining characteristics of Inspirational Motivation and Intellectual Stimulation will also be included to better understand the context of his in- and out-of-game leadership. Within the context of in-game play and interaction with guild members, the following sections will describe 4M’s experiences, framed by Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** Described as a characteristic that portrays to followers high standards of moral and ethical conduct, Informant 4M provided multiple examples pertaining to every sub-characteristic. With the highest number of instances described in the following order from highest to lowest, *Decision Making, Setting the Example, Leader’s Expectations, Visible Leadership* and *Setting the example*.

**Visible leadership.** As an active raid leader and strategist, 4M take on a management role, which he applies, out-of-game. He describes himself as being “the guy who knows about how to succeed in the game and others will sort of all in line behind me and having enough controls in the system to be able to discipline when necessary, but primarily lead by example.” Through his participant and role in the guild he can guide his team to success.
Setting the example. In this example, 4M describe how his actions In-game align to his role as a tank (an avatar designed to take heavy damage during game play). “I was the person who comes up to the biggest monster and punches him right in the nose. So he stays mad at me instead of the fragile little mage and rogues. Being an instigator helps. (Ha).” As an example for his class, others can follow his example by aligning themselves to their respective In-game roles.

Decision making. In this example, 4M describes how communicating his high standards and vision for leadership can deter the need to make decisions that lead to the expulsion of a guild member. "Truth be told that In-game the most important thing is that folks understood that you would kick them if they behaved badly." Followers that understood that there were consequences refrained from engaging in activities that did not conform to the social norms of the group; those who didn't understand the standards were expelled from the guild.

Representing the group. As a guild known for its high performance, 4M was able to participate in activities outside of the guild and play with some of the best online players. "We had some very good players, so getting invites to groups who could succeed all the way to the end wasn't hard. Especially since my character was a tank and people always need tanks and I always had a tank alt." As a representative of the group, members outside of the guild form a perception of other members of the same guild based on the actions of 4M.

Leader’s expectations. Consistency of attendance and willingness to help members of their community are expectations he has of his guild and members. "So having people who are really excellent at their class is good if you’re going to run a hardcore guild and you’re going to boot people out for not performing, but if you actually like these people and you want them to get better, you need to have folks who are willing to come in there consistently and are willing
to help out all the time." By communicating these expectations, 4M clearly identify social norms and standards for followers to emulate.

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** Given that members of his social guild are self-motivating, 4M did not describe a high number of instances where he persuaded members to participate in guild activities. *Communicates Performance* stood out as a sub-characteristic identified by the high frequency of examples provided by 4M. Examples in all sub-characteristics will be provided to identify patterns and context of experiences relevant to transformational leadership.

**Alternative solutions.** The example provided by 4M describes his In-game role when communicating alternative solutions to followers during an In-game battle. “My job is to have a fairly calm voice and be able to call out to people, when they’re standing in the fire and tell them when they are about to die.” In-game battles or challenges are often fraught with consequences that can result in the “death” of your avatar. Although a temporary death, the loss of a raid member can mean the difference between success and failure for the team.

**Encouraging participation.** When addressing conflict between two members or parties, he described his role in the following way. “There was a certain amount of management work there in terms of like… sometimes softening things out when people had disagreements.” Sometimes in the form of in or out-of-game rewards, members are encouraged to moved past individual or group conflict.

**Connecting group values.** As portrayed by 4M, the guild’s key value is their service to each other and the relationships they’ve built. He describes the values of the guild in the following way, “It really is a type of service type organization as opposed to straight uberness. There where some cases where we had some really great players, but we asked to leave because
all they cared about was the loot. I have to tell you that when you’ve played the game as long
as I have, you know there’s always a bigger shiner hammer.” For 4M, the value is not the In-
game rewards but the connections made with other guild members.

Communicate performance. The example provided by 4M comes from an out-of-game
daily practice for providing quick solutions and feedback to a team. “At [Software Company
Name Removed] the daily triage process is called WAR and there is a lot of shouting… a lot of
“oh my gosh, there’s this problem what are we going to do about it?” So, being there and
working through some of those dire circumstances were very, very useful in raids where
fireballs are falling from the ceiling and giant critters are coming.” Through this
communication and feedback managers and followers alike can quickly reflect, provide
feedback and identify an agreed upon solution to overcoming an In-game challenge.

Insight through reflection. The In-game story brings to light the importance of leaders
connecting with followers on more than a technical level. 4M share the following story about a
rogue in his guild. “There was this one guy who was the best rogue I had ever seen and he was
absolutely and technically right about every detail he tried to coach the other rogues through,
and so help me, no one could stand him. He was merciless and he was constantly telling them…
“No that’s wrong.” “You’ve got to do this.” “What’s the matter with you? Don’t you want to be
the best?” and the answer was… He just wasn’t reaching them at their level, so that taught me a
lot.” Leadership is more than just technical expertise in one's discipline; it is the relationships
that ultimately earn you the trust and respect of your followers.

Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). Primarily a social guild,
examples were provided for each sub-characteristic, but were not described with equal
frequency. 4M spoke primarily as a strategist and his ability to work with members of the guild
to overcome In-game challenges. Three sub-characteristics provided a number of examples in transparency, recommends strategies and solutions on follower abilities.

Transparency. This example describes 4M’s primary role as raid leader, which is to ensure everyone understands the strategy for overcoming the In-game challenge. “My primary role is that of raid leader and that’s basically understanding the strategy for winning the fight against the bosses and talking people through their roles during the action.” Meeting with raid participants and talking them through their roles enables each member to understand how their collective contributions will enable them to overcome a challenge they could not do alone.

Data driven solutions. The example provided used by 4M describes how he changed the size of the guild, based on the changes made to the game. “The game itself changed the dynamics of how big of a group we had to carry, and I have to say when we were keeping forty people around it was a lot more work and there was a lot of grief.” The more the members would mean a greater the likelihood of conflict. With the departure of members and diminishing of ranks there will be the need to evaluate member abilities, gear and experience to determine if a recruiting effort must be made. Given the online tools available to leaders, a considerable amount of data is available to evaluate the skills and abilities of existing members.

Continuous improvement. 4M describes how continuous improvement is obtained by followers being provided maps and specific instructions on where to stand and what to do. “In the game you have to micromanage, in fact In-game people beg you to micromanage.” Forms of scaffolding, followers are given the opportunity to experience the step-by-step progression of completing an In-game challenge.

Culture of problem solving. The example provided by 4M portrays a culture of problem solving, by avoiding In-game death. “And to remind them, okay guys this is the point when
you, the person over here… if you don’t do your thing. We’re all going to fail at this and have
to…you know, die resurrect and try again.” In-game failure or the possibility of In-game failure
creates collaboration, dialog and problem solving. As described earlier, 4M portrayed In-game
followers to encourage leaders to be micromanagers.

Recommends strategies. In his role as raid leader and strategist, 4M describe how he
recommends strategies and tactics to followers, providing greater insight to In-game battles.
“Be the tactical guy. Being the guide and lead for going through In-game content to be
successful.”

Solutions on follower abilities. The example provided by 4M highlights the need to
communicate and identify or train the appropriate number of players to be successful in game.
“The fights are very technical very complicated and getting 10 people in a raid who all know
the fight isn’t going to happen.” Player abilities and experiences play an important role in the
success or failure of a team during an In-game challenge.”

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). As the leader of a primarily social
guild, he showed consideration toward their situation, connected their individual values to that
of the guild, and nurtured new followers and their needs. Informant 4M provided examples for
all four transformational leadership sub-characteristics in Considering the Situation, Connecting
Individual Values, and Followers Needs.

Considering the situation. 4M describe an event where a raid member was having
difficulty with a particular In-game challenge. Because of the team member’s poor
performance, the group had “wiped” (everyone died) multiple times. As the raid leader, 4M had
the following discussion with the team member. “You know what, you aren’t kind of not
making it tonight, maybe in a little while, after we’ve mastered this fight and we’re a little over
geared for it, you can come back an try again. But for now… we’re going to have to go with someone else who’s got a little bit more experience.” Considerate of the person’s situation, 4M offer an opportunity to try again with players who have greater in experience and “greater gear”.

*Connecting individual values.* The statement from 4M comes from a comment made when discussing the vision of 4MGFW. It clearly defines why the guild was formed and how they feel about their followers. “We were by far more concerned about being a supportive guild as opposed to being the first to do In-game content. We made a conscious decision that we weren’t going to be a guild that booted people out that weren’t great players. We felt that everyone had something to contribute.” Although the values of the group may be consistent, at this time, followers have the potential to changing and reshaping the group based on a shifting of values.

*Nurturing followers.* As described in his interview, the 4MGFW guild is the kind of place where followers are nurtured. “Be the kind of guild where you could go in and play a game with your kids and if you have a problem someone would come and help you out.” By recruiting like-minded, service centered members, 4M are creating a community that provides scaffolding to newcomers in need of help, regardless of age.

*Followers needs.* 4M’s statement regarding follower’s needs pertains to creating an environment that is sensitive to the varying perceptions of communication between a wide generation gap of players. Although typically associated with age, a generational gap is rooted in differences of culture, which is not easily evident in game. “When you have a group of folks who have a range of ages from teens to their sixties, its very important that you don’t have folks that think they can just do anything and say anything, because there’s a huge generational gap.” Leading by example and providing clear expectations to followers, 4M is creating a supporting
environment that enables diverse groups to communicate and support each others goals and In-game success.

**Out-of-game leadership.** Much like his In-game experiences, the out-of-game leadership characteristics relayed in the study are idealized influence and individualized consideration. As software manager and strategist, there are parallels to his in- and out-of-game leadership experiences. “For example, one of things I noticed is that over on the marketing side of the house they put together a list of 500 key word phrases everyone is searching for everyday and then I look…well how much content is there to cover those key word phrases? The short answer is… maybe a quarter of it and folks had budgets to create 25% of what they would need.” By helping identify customer needs and connecting them to the appropriate writing resources, he’s helping followers to understanding the strategies to success. Compared to the In-game examples described by 4M, the frequency and instances of leadership were not as high. However, it is important to make note of any patterns, lived experiences and context in which leadership characteristics were evident in- and out-of-game. This next section illustrates 4M’s out-of-game leadership experiences within the framework of Transformational Leadership’s four criterions, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

**Charisma (idealized influence).** Much like the In-game examples, Informant 4M provided an example of the five leadership sub-characteristics with three described prominently, specifically Visible Leadership, Setting the Example, Leader’s Expectations, and Decision Making.

*Visible leadership.* As a strategist, 4M is seen as one who initiates dialog and applies his problem solving skills resolving the challenges of the organization. He can be seen “talking to a
lot of directors and VPs and figuring out where the gaps are.” In doing so, he communicates his leadership and high ethical standards to individuals and groups outside of his team.

**Setting the example.** As the leader of his team, he sets the example for his team by sharing his high goals and interests. “I got my MBA while I was at [company] and studying Akido. You can do it, you just have to schedule it.” As an example, he is indirectly communicating his high goals and standards to followers; inspiring them to be mentally and physically capable of facing life’s challenges.

**Decision making.** By establishing and communicating the desired outcomes to followers, his employees and team members are able to form decisions consistent with the standards and social norms of the community. "Employees in the company usually have a desired business outcome. They may disagree about how to achieve that. But in general there’s always a common direction, “What do they want to do for the customer”." Putting the customer in the center of success measurements and business activities, conflict and decisions become a matter of communicating and identifying perceived obstacles.

**Representing the group.** The example provided by 4M highlights how his role enables him to bridge the needs of his customer base to ensure the appropriate information and resources are available. “My job is to put into programs and partner with other groups who do create content, “Go write this” and “Don’t write that” and basically go identify real customer needs and connect those up to real writing resources.” Interestingly, in this role he represents the needs of groups, writers and customers.

**Leader’s expectations.** As content strategist and Software Manager for a large technology company, the communication of clear guidelines to team members helps to ensure product consistency. “So basically I would give them guidelines and say, this is what you need
to do to get content into Windows.” In this case a very hierarchical model and clear guidelines help set the expectations for followers in such as a large project.

**Inspiring others (inspirational motivation).** Informant 4M did not provide many examples of this transformational leadership characteristic. However, working with a very driven team with clear expectations may not require the need to motivate technology professionals, who may see an interest in the finished product.

**Alternative solutions.** In this example, 4M is attempting to motivate his workplace team members with a story called “Alterac Valley Syndrome” where players stop progressing and they just “turtle up”, no longer innovating and looking for alternative solutions. “Come on guys let’s rally up, gather together and push across that bridge. We have to take this other stuff on this map or we’re going to lose.” I’ve found that to be a truism, especially in business as well, and when things are going badly.” Although an In-game scenario, 4M described how an alternative solution could be offered as an observation of behaviors found in game, which can be applied out-of-game.

**Encouraging participation.** Training and cheerleading are the two ways in which 4M asks an employee to complete a given task. “If there’s something I ask them to do and its not getting done… is it the case that they don’t know enough (is it a training kind of thing) or is it that they don’t want to do it because of motivation. If that’s the case then you have to do a bit of cheerleading. It’s basically identifying, are they ready or not or are they willing or not. If they aren’t able to do what you ask them… “Wow! Surprise… it didn’t get done.” By providing these two options, employees are encouraged and given the tools to be successful.

**Connecting group values.** Using the “Alterac Valley Syndrome” described earlier, 4M relays the departmental importance of improving one’s self as opposed to “turtling up” and not
learning a new skill that could mean the difference between keeping or losing your job. “I ended up managing a very successful management team because I told people, “How are you going to go to the next level? And how are you going to survive?”” By initiating and continuing this dialog with followers, 4M communicate the organization’s values of professional development for its employees.

Communicate performance. 4M describe how he prefers to discuss with employees their plan to accomplish the assigned task(s). “I’ve generally found that having that communication with them and making sure I understand exactly what they’re trying to accomplish is what works.” Understanding the process employed, 4M can determine the likelihood of success and provide any necessary scaffolding if necessary.

Insight through reflection. The out-of-game reflection comes from an In-game insight called “Alterac Valley Syndrome”. 4M seeks out those individuals willing to take those risks and begin innovating again. “Whenever I go to a new role I look around for people who are turtled up in Alterac Valley and I try to present those metrics to them to show them that basically, “Look I know you think the most important thing for you to succeed is for you to do the same job, you’ve been doing forever, but the truth is the actual point of the game is over here and you just have to go over there and do that.”” This syndrome is used to convince its members to take chances, because although there is a chance of failure the resulting success could be a larger benefit.

Collaborating towards a solution (intellectual stimulation). Much like his In-game environment, there were examples pertaining to out-of-game collaboration, but not to the frequency of other characteristics. Given that 4M works in a very hierarchical environment and have virtually limitless resources, there is a very strong likelihood that the leadership sub-
characteristics are met by an invisible process not articulated by 4M. However, the examples that align with the listed sub-categories have been included to assist in the identification of possible themes or patterns pertaining to out-of-game leadership.

*Transparency.* Understanding his new role one that manages those to manage the writing teams, he understands the appropriateness of the transparency needed to have the teams be successful. “I spent a lot of real time, energy managing writers, and now I spend a lot of time instead being the key strategist who advises the folks who manage the writing teams.” For the teams to be successful, the appropriate management of information and decisions must be made, “up, down and side”, describing the sharing of information to administration (Up), frontline staff (Down) and department heads (side).

*Data driven solutions.* 4M describe how a great deal of coordination must occur for a successful collaboration. “I would drive the schedule and there was a lot of coordination around there involving 200 people just outside of my team creating content in support of us.” As the software manager and content strategist for a large software company, data and feedback must be gathered from a large number of teams and individuals to produce a consistent and relevant content.

*Continuous improvement.* 4M describes the specific task of employees to aid in understanding the complexities of “What” and “How” things get done in a very large software company. “I had people who worked for me to figure out the “What” and that leads to business requirements and authoring tools and back end systems that help define the “How”.” Armed with this information, 4M and his team and work to improve and innovate software content.

*Culture of problem solving.* In contrast to the In-game environment, followers do not want to be micromanaged. “As I manage more, I spent far more time on high level strategic
planning, “these are the programs we need to have in place and you guys don’t need me to be there micromanaging things here or there.”” Seeing his role more as a facilitator, 4M thinks strategically from a very high level to provide employees with the necessary tools, skills and processes to make them successful.

Recommends strategies. 4M described a strategy he employed to convince his team that some of their work was no longer relevant. Given that some of his team members did not want to change, he shared the following. “What you need to do is go around measuring what the customer is asking for and what I was able to show to them was that 20% of the content they were writing… no one ever read.” No one wants to create work that people find of little value. By providing this information to his team, they started to take those first steps to changing.

Solutions on follower abilities. The example provided by 4M describes the formation of his workplace team. “Starting a brand new team and understanding the problems to solve, those are two very different problems. So basically came in and understood what I needed and built my team very slowly over time.” With the knowledge and understanding of business challenges, 4M can identify or hire employees that have the necessary skills or abilities to resolving some of the more challenging issues facing software content.

Nurturing others (individualized consideration). Creating an environment where he listens to their needs, 4M provide an opportunity for dialog and action for these followers to fulfill those goals and ambitions. Although he did describe a number of instances pertaining to Connecting Individual Values and Followers Needs, other sub-characteristics with examples will be included to help identify themes and patterns.

Considering the situation. A leader’s knowledge about the skills, abilities and situation of an employee plays an important part in creating an environment that is supportive and
nurturing. 4M create such an environment by first learning about the employee and creating an environment that supports their situation. “I had people following me around at every point because they knew that not only did I know their background and knew what they could do.” Because of his ability to connect with followers, he is followed closely and employees look to become involved in his projects. Being valued by the leader and organization, employees brought value to the workplace.

*Connecting individual values.* During his individual meetings with employees, 4M challenge them to reflect on their goals and their future. The following is a sample statement he may give to an employee. “Okay, were not going to talk about what projects you were on this week, but you’re not only going to come back and tell me what your goals are you’re also going to tell me about the classes that you take.” By providing additional training and opportunities aligned with the values of employees, 4M created a supportive and ultimately more productive work environment.

*Nurturing followers.* 4M nurtures followers by initiating a dialog with followers regarding his high personal expectations and providing the support necessary for them to reach their personal and professional goals. “I was really good about getting people to pursue MBAs or certifications. I believe in that.”

*Followers needs.* When discussing follower’s needs, which may be in conflict with the needs of the organization, 4M has a guiding policy for employee meetings. “We schedule a meeting and we discuss it in a fair, firm and friendly manner.” When communicating the alignment of individual or group needs, the dialog must be honest (firm), respectful (friend) and constructive (fair).
The guild forum/website: the 4MGFW. A leader of a well established social guild, 4M’s guild has an online presence found strictly on Facebook and is closed to anyone outside of their very close knit group. Unlike most World of Warcraft Guilds, a large majority of players do not mask their out-of-game identities (seen from the screenshot above). Given the strong blurring of in- and out-of-game guild activities and identities, 4M was not able to grant the researcher access to the closed community beyond what is available from Facebook. However, he did provide a detailed description of activities and processes as part of the In-game interview.

Utilizing the Guild Website/Forum: Opportunities for Transformational Leadership Sub-Characteristics from Chapter 3, this section will explore and evaluate informant 4M’s web presence for the four transformational leadership characteristics Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. As described by 4M, this section will provide a public view of informant 4M’s guild events and activities around the framework of transformational leadership.

4MGFW: charisma. 4M described the creation of guild guidelines and rules, which dictated social norms. However, he did not find those rule to be as effective as communicating
the importance and the execution of disciplinary action if those rules were violated. “I discovered that at one time I had published policies on the website because I’m a real life manager and I put way too much thought into that. Truth be told that In-game the most important thing is that folks understood that you would kick them if they behaved badly.” By articulating that existence and enforcement of guild policies for 4MGFW, 4M has provided information that supports some evidence of Idealized Influence within the guild.

4MGFW: inspiring others. Evidence, which encourage the participation of members, was described during the In-game interview. 4M specifically state, “We share lots of links about what’s going on in the game and that sort of thing” indicating that information may be valuable in game. However, the a great deal of the communication and activities within the guild pertain to their out-of-game relationships. “Frankly, postings are about folks families. This week we had a guild member who lost his father and so there are a lot of sympathy posts. The activity on the site is by far people interacting as human beings and not as their characters. There isn’t any role playing or any of that sort of thing. We’ve been at it for a long, long time.” In the 4MGFW social media community, the incentive to participate and communicate is bound by their sense of community and relationships, initiated from within the guild.

4MGFW: collaborating towards a solution. As with other guild sites, a great deal of information is available for guild members and leaders. The 4MGFW guild and its members are no exception. The same online tools can find a great deal of information pertaining to the In-game performance of the guild.
Much like other guilds, this information can be used to improve In-game performance for future In-game encounters.

**4MGFW: nurturing others.** A very social guild, 4MGFW is a community that works together to create a supportive environment both in and especially out-of-game. 4M describe how the guild periodically coordinates floral arrangements for members who experience a death in the family. “The guild got together and they did a collection on PayPal and sent us a beautiful arrangement. That’s happened a couple of times.” Given the blurring of in- and out-of-game identities and relationships. The nurturing of guild relationships isn’t limited only to In-game interaction. 4M describes how and where he meets with guild members out-of-game and the supportive environment they’ve built through their In-game experience. “I have met most of my guild members in person. Most recently I flew out to the panhandle of Florida to hangout with one of my best mage buddies. We’ve had meetups in Vegas where there were 8 of us all in the same place. We really are friends. One of the good things about the game, I felt...
like I got to know more about the true character of folks because when you’re in there dishing it out and taking it, you really get to know who will stick by you. You can also get to know who can die and laugh about it.” For 4MGFW and 4M, the nurturing of In-game guild members and their relationships occur out-of-game.

**The survey: informant 4M.** As described in Chapter 3 of Phase II, Questionnaire informant 4M complete an online survey of their perceived transformational leadership style, measuring the four traits of Idealized Influence or Charisma (IN), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). A Senior Manager and Content Strategist of a global software company with the high characteristic of Inspirational Motivation, 4M would inspire others within his global software company to excel personally or professionally. He would communicate relevant data driven solutions that would persuade followers to consider alternative solutions towards success. An excellent communicator and command for language, he would be an excellent writer and public speaker. The order of the remaining three characteristics from highest to lowest is as follows: Intellectual Stimulation, Idealized Influence and Individual Consideration. With Intellectual Stimulation second on the list of transformational leadership characteristics, his leadership would have a focus on creative and innovative pursuits. The gathering and sharing of information is presented in a constructive manner and offers an insight into an in or out-of-game challenge. Called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the survey consists of 43 questions using a 5 point frequency Likert scale (0 = *Not at all*, 1 = *Once in a while*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *Fairly Often*, 4 = *Frequently, if not always*). Once completed the results are tabulated and sent to the researcher for evaluation. Displayed below is the result of informant 4M’s MLQ survey.
Table 11.

*Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Data: Informant 4M*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Idealized Influence (IN)</th>
<th>Inspirational Motivation (IM)</th>
<th>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</th>
<th>Individual Consideration (IC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4M</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information indicates informant 4M perceives himself as a leader with the following traits (in order of frequency):

- Inspirational Motivation (most frequent)
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Idealized Influence
- Individualized Consideration (least frequent)

**Leadership relationships among interview, website and survey.** Combining 4M’s interview, website and leadership survey, we see an interplay between his in- and out-of-game leadership roles, as guild officer and Software Manager and Content Strategist for a global software company. To understanding the lived leadership experience in- and out-of-games, we must understand how informant 4M perceives himself, how this community scaffolds his perceptions as a leader and how the transformational leadership experiences manifest themselves across similar contexts in an out-of-game.

A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was taken by informant 4M and assessed him as perceiving himself one who Inspires Others (Inspirational Motivation). As described in the previous section (The survey: informant 4M), 4M received scores ranking his transformational leadership characteristics in the following order (from highest to lowest) Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Idealized Influence and Individualized Consideration. His is identified as a leader whose greatest leadership characteristic the ability
to inspire others towards a common goal or activity. The results correspond to the activities in- and out-of-game where he was engaged in persuading followers or peers to not “turtle up” in what he would call “Alterac Valley Syndrome.”

4M’s in- and out-of-game communities provide a variety of resources to support followers. Out-of-game, 4M’s followers have a variety of workplace resources to support their personal and professional goals. An avid martial artist and MBA graduate, he inspires followers to excel and pursue graduate degrees in their area of interest. In game, there is considerable blurring of in- and out-of-game activities that encourage followers to nurture and support their community. As relayed by 4M in the section “Guild Forum/Website:4MGFW”, members share their in- and out-of-game identities, successes and challenges (loss of a family member) via a closed social media platform. A close-knit community, the guild has extended their relationships beyond the confines of the game and actively engages in meetups for out-of-game activities.

Utilizing his ability to motivate members toward a common solution, 4M describe how he was able to assist his in- and out-of-game community to overcome what he calls, “Alterac Valley Syndrome” (AVS). Essentially, the syndrome afflicts individuals who are no longer willing to take chances or innovate for fear of failure or rejection. This mindset creates what 4M describes as followers who “turtle up”, referring to a defensive mechanism employed by a semi-aquatic reptile with an impenetrable shell to hide in its shell until the danger passes. Team members who have “turtled up”, remain in a defensive posture, doing just enough to stay alive and not willing to move outside the confines of what they perceive to be “safe”. Although this strategy may work well for the semi-aquatic reptile, it can prove hazardous for In-game battles of “capture the flag” and out-of-game organizations or companies in a highly competitive...
market. 4M has learned to combat this syndrome by using his ability to motivate followers using data-based alternative solutions to in- and out-of-game challenges. Whether he’s in or out-of-game, he may be inspiring followers to move out of their comfort zone by saying, “Come on guys let’s rally up, gather together and push across that bridge. We have to take this other stuff on this map or we’re going to lose.” Companies or individuals who can identify symptoms of “turtling” and finding ways to combat “Alterac Valley Syndrome” by leveraging the transformational leadership characteristics of their administration will continue to enjoy a competitive advantage over similar organizations. Within the framework of Transformational Leadership characteristics, the experience of overcoming an Alterac Valley Syndrome can be illustrated in the following way:

- **Idealized Influence**: Creating processes and standards that incorporate a culture of innovation and risk taking.
- **Inspirational Motivation**: Articulating solutions and inspiring followers towards a clear vision for the future.
- **Intellectual Stimulation**: Leveraging data to make informed collaborative solutions.
- **Individualized Consideration**: Understanding the needs of followers and customers by providing a vehicle for feedback and support.

As one who inspires and motivates followers in- and out-of-game, 4M leverages data-driven alternatives to create change in groups and organizations facing adversity. Initially seen in-game with out-of-game implications, the effects of “Alterac Valley Syndrome” can be diminished or even overcome by employing the strengths of transformational leaders.

Organizations who can provide experiences that enable leaders to identify, analyze, and
articulate timely solutions to dynamic challenges will continue to lead their industry and overcome their real or perceived adversary.

Revisiting the Research Questions

Based on the data gathered from the six cases of leadership, this section revisits the three research questions with specific examples and their contexts. The included examples come from patterns and emergent themes from gathered data that has been synthesized and analyzed within the framework of transformational leadership characteristics idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

**Question 1: What is the lived leadership experience of leaders of groups/teams in massively multiplayer online world game?** Much of the lived experiences of In-game leaders is centered around the management of potentially non-stop game play and the wide variety of a player’s in- and out-of-game backgrounds, which could impact team performance or sense of community. The lived experience for In-game leaders of teams includes the sharing of responsibilities and duties, conformity to guild values, micromanagement and lower consequences to failure.

*Responsibilities are shared between one or more.* In-game leaders distribute the duties and workload of leadership amongst their peer group. Although the tasks and responsibilities may vary from one group or guild to another, the group makes decisions. These duties are typically posted on their guild website and the leader provided a designation of rank according to time served with the guild (Veteran) or service performed (Class officer). Tasks such as in recruiting may fall on one officer to complete and another to officially add their name to the roster. However, the “final word” is typically made by consensus. During a time of rapid growth for the guild, 3M described as the guild leader. Although he was a leader “who got the
charter signed”, he was vital part of the leadership community that guided over two hundred guild members.

I was guild leader because I was the person who got the charter signed in the game. So I kept saying all five of us are the leaders and that I’m only leader by name, but as the guild got bigger, it was harder and harder to say that. And people would come in with these expectations that the guild has a certain hierarchy. We (the core members) kept emphasizing that we in would keep discussing everything and any important decision would be open to everyone. So the management/structure of the guild was very democratic, very flat. But people would come in saying that I would have the final word, as a leader, even though I didn’t want the final word. It was more of a council; we called ourselves “the five officers”.

**Conformity to values and guild cultural.** Guild leaders are often faced with the coordination and communication of players from varying cultures, languages, age groups, and disabilities. This variety of its membership requires conformity to the group’s social norms and standard practices or general rules on how to act and communicate with other members. Violating these standards can result in disciplinary action, expulsion or denial of access to guild resources. Because of the importance and adherence to the guilds standards and values by the initiate, a trial period for a limited time is in place allowing the applicant and guild members to interact. If for some reason any of the two parties feel that they would or could not conform, the relationship could be terminated at any time. The example provided by informant 3M describe an instance where a cultural divide was too great for the parties to reconcile.

There were two kids who joined and it was very clear that one wasn’t as mature as the rest of us. They didn’t fit in the culture of the guild, asking for handouts. We would
encourage them to come along with us to complete some quests so they could get some
gold, but they wanted people to just give them stuff. They also communicated very “leet
speak” while everyone uses complete sentences. It was fine if you were in a raid
(because time is a factor) but when we're not raiding it wasn’t really something the
group found appropriate. So I told them “you don’t really fit well with the group. You
aren’t really participating and you haven’t been really offering anything to us. You’re
asking for freebies. There are other guilds on the server that may be a better fit for you.
So we’re kicking you out, but here’s some other places that you can go.” We didn’t just
ditch them and we talked to the other guy and said, “okay, we’re kicking your friend out,
we’re going to kick you out as well because you came as a pair. We don’t have any
issues with you, but, we’re assuming you want to hang out with your friend.” And that
was true. He wanted to hang out with this friend so he left as well.

**Followers expect some micromanagement.** Guild leaders are often faced with
followers who are interested in obtaining the highly sought after In-game rewards dropped by
bosses, but do not have the knowledge or In-game to obtain them. To overcome this
expectation and lack of abilities on the part of followers, leaders closely scrutinize In-game gear
with the many online theorycrafting tools available on the Internet and provide In-game tasks to
obtain gear suitable for the anticipated guild activity. As a member or potential member of a
raid group, individuals are expected to complete certain tasks prior to participating, sometimes
called “homework”. Although the assignments can be considered to be “a grind”, as described
by 2M they are what is needed for the team as a whole to be successful. Failure to complete the
assignment(s) can mean not participating in the raid and not obtaining the valuable In-game
reward.
You also have to be patient with guild members if you want to be a good leader. It's frustrating at times especially if you're working towards obtaining special gear. It can be a grind working killing all the bosses multiple times in order to get them to drop certain items.

As described by 2M, when it comes to obtaining special In-game gear, followers are willing to go through a level of micromanagement before and during the In-game challenge. Overcoming bosses can be a mechanically and technically complex task especially for a team of players. Communicating when and how to performing a specific attack or shifting into a desired location is the duty of raid leaders and strategists. Given the level of complexity, followers may not learn the techniques to overcome the boss, but still have the desire to obtain the In-game reward. As 4M describes, followers “beg you” to micromanage them and assist them in receiving this special gear.

In the game you have to micromanage, in fact In-game people beg you to micromanage. The fights are very technical very complicated and getting 10 people in a raid that all know the fight isn’t going to happen. You’ll have someone there who’s in it for the first time or the second time and if you can’t talk them through it, that’s a problem. Clarity of communication.

**No one really dies.** The consequences of a player’s actions are not as severe in game. Failure to participate or continue to violate the standard rules or guidelines could result in expulsion from the guild. Although the final step in the disciplinary process and possible cause of an emotional outburst, expulsion from the guild does not have life threatening effects, as described by informant 4M.
When kicking members off… you have to be fair, firm and friendly… there’s no way around it. When I first started out as a guild master, I was really kind of hesitant to kick people out, I thought at was really mean, and in the end I realized they don’t die, they go off somewhere else and they can always come back. I’ve fired people at work and I’ve laid them off and it isn’t fun either, but it’s a much more serious thing. When you’ve been through that process you do realize that people go on and it’s for best and for the group who really want things to succeed.

**Question 2: What is the lived leadership experience of group/team leaders in an MMO game setting outside of game settings in their workplace?** In contrast to In-game environment, a leader’s lived experience is heavily influenced institutional standards and resources. Out-of-game, standards, guidelines and processes are outlined by the organization and do not change without further discussion from the institutional community. Secondly, there are considerable resources to assist leaders in the workplace to support every aspect of their leadership experience. When compared to In-game resources, services out-of-game available to followers and leaders are extensive. With these two factors as a foundation, the lived out-of-game experiences for leaders include sole responsibility and accountability for assignments, access to a variety of institutional resources and life changing consequences to failure.

**Sole responsibility and accountability.** Having sole responsibility and accountability in the workplace is a lived leadership experience. Unlike In-game, leadership where duties are divided, leaders are identified by an individual (CEO) or organizational body (Board of Directors) with the purpose of leading a group or accomplish a given goal. These goals can be complex and require time, coordination of people and resources and a problem solving. As described by 1M, he was empowered by his group to represent their values on projects.
Accountable to his constituency, 1M is responsible to keeping them inform on project status and priorities; as well as delegating duties to accomplish the needs of the group.

As a CDAC chair, I did volunteer to get everyone excited about the project stuff and meet new people to be a positive change. At the last meeting, the college administrator wanted to talk to us about institutional initiative, but our agenda was already filled. He wanted a quarter of our time and I had to say “No”. So I said, why don’t you just tell me or write up what you want to say and I’ll share with the group. So I shared the information with the group and that was it. No offense, but if you can send me information about what you plan to talk about, you’re most likely going to talk in circles for 15 minutes, when our time can be best serve in other ways. The ironic part is that the college administrator will spend time more time with us. So I asked if anyone would like to attend this group. So I delegated some duties to faculty, based on their interest, skills and who may be best to represent the group.

Access to a variety of resources. In contrast to their out-of-game environment, providing access to critical services or resources is a lived experience out-of-game leaders depend upon. Faced with some of life’s challenges, leaders and followers alike depend on these resources for their basic health and safety needs. The example provided by 1F illustrates the need for counseling, health, and possibly security. In her statement, she draws a close parallel between the challenges facing her In-game environment, while utilizing services out-of-game.

We got an App from a person who had some significant emotional and psychological problems so much that he told us about that in the application… and I respect that as an individual, that he as up front and he made no excuses for it but that there was something about that. In thinking that were just not individuals here and that I’m also
(As a professor or leader) I’m a leader of a classroom but I’m not capable of dealing with each of my students emotional and mental problems, I’m not qualified for that… that’s what counselors are for. I send my students if they come to me and they need help to someone who is professionally trained for it and we got this application and I was afraid that I … or we weren’t emotionally equipped or professional equipped to handle this individual and I had to think about 24 other people in a team and how this individual’s long/short term stability might affect 24 other people.

Consequences are life changing. Losing one’s employment and reputation in a specific field or institution is a lived leadership experience in the workplace. Consequences to failure in the workplace are significant. Failure in a project could result in demotion, additional training or re-assignment. Recurring failures on higher profile projects may result in termination, which would change one’s lifestyle and everyone involved very quickly. The example provided by 1F portrays an event where a faculty member at her college was acting inappropriately with students and other faculty. After repeated complaints from students and fellow faculty, college administration still did nothing. Fed up, she led a group of students and faculty to have the faculty member removed.

In the middle of the semester, a fellow classmate and myself said we were fed up with faculty and students in tears and offended because of slurs. So we lead an inquisition to have her fired. It was a process because she was well established in her field and nobody expected the “[name] Inquisition”. So I worked with another women in class and we ended up contacting folks and rallying the faculty to come out and say things and write up something on paper. So getting people to sign anything to have her removed is a big deal and huge effort. Finally after going to three different departments, we were
able to have her removed and I feel bad as an individual, I know I’ve had to fire people before, but some of the things she said and did just disqualified her from her position. As a leader and individual she should have never been put into a position to say and do the things she did… that were insensitive. It was difficult because after that situation, it shadowed my reputation as a graduate student.

**Question 3: Which, if any, characteristic of leadership development experiences appear in both of these settings?**

Given the six informants in this study, there is at least one example of a transformational leadership characteristic experience that appears in- and out-of-games. They are described as leadership experiences committing to standards and philosophy, motivating others through reflection, collaborating towards transparent solutions, and nurturing success by scaffolding followers.

**Committing to standards and philosophy.** 1F’s adherence her personal philosophy and leadership standards, which guide her decision-making and selection of team members, are an example of *idealized influence* that appears in- and out-of-game. In this example she describes the similarities of context and standards between the formation of a good In-game raid team, an efficient kitchen staff and a classroom of twenty students. Utilizing her own personal values of raid philosophy, she equates in the activities of a good raid group with those of a restaurant.

In my experience in the restaurant business, running a guild is like putting together an efficient kitchen staff. In as much as you need to have a tank, a healer and DPS… in a restaurant, you need people who excel in different areas and can come together as a team to produce a great finished product in a particular amount of time that will make the customer happy. It’s kind of like killing a boss except you’re feeding them. So I draw on that experience and in the classroom (as a professor), it almost like the opposite
which is that now I’m raid leading a pickup group, a PUG of like a bunch of people that have never met and I need to find out each member’s individual strengths and pull them together and make them a team as my classroom strategy. I’m not sure if I call upon my RL experiences to dictate my In-game experiences, but a lot of times I can and do make the analogy between my classroom experiences and my In-game experiences. I firmly believe that my classroom of 20 people, teaching introduction to literature is a team activity. Ultimately we need to work together to have a conversation to get the ball rolling, to make connections and take them into the outside world. So that these ideas can keep rolling throughout the world and time… which is all so very romantic, but it all has to do with teamwork, coming together and helping one another. That’s what a good raid group does, in my own personal raid philosophy and that’s also what a good restaurant does.

Motivating others through reflection. The 4M’s response and solution to what he calls “Alterac Valley syndrome” is an example of an inspirational motivation experience that appears in- and out-of-game. In game, 4M noticed the behavior of his teammates during a battle, in Alterac Valley, where they are to capture and occupy the largest number of strategic locations. During these battles, he noticed teammates preferring a strong defensive position; he called “turtling” and waits out the opposing team’s attacks. Unfortunately their defensive position also rendered the team immobile, allowing the opposing team to capture more positions and win the game. To overcome this syndrome and win, 4M persuaded members of his team to leave the safety of their position to claim additional positions. Out-of-game, he saw a similar context in his workplace. Where employees were fearful and were turtling to protect what they thought was important, instead of “winning the game”. In the statement below, he described how he
realigned the values of the employee to reflect and consider an alternative solution with the data gathered.

The truth is it was me going around saying, “what you need to do is go around measuring what the customer is asking for and what I was able to show to them was that 20% of the content they were writing… no one ever read. Not one hit a month, no one ever cared about it or wanted it.” They were determined to have it, because they had it before and they were determined to find a way to be better at doing the same thing they had done forever, instead of actually going out and figuring out what they had to do to win the game. So whenever I go to a new role I look around for people who are turtled up in Alterac Valley and I try to present those metrics to them to show them that basically, “Look I know you think the most important thing for you to succeed is for you to do the same job, you’ve been doing forever, but the truth is the actual point of the game is over here and you just have to go over there and do that.” I found that its hard to get people to give up work they’ve been doing forever, even when its completely useless than having them embrace something new.

**Collaborating towards transparent solutions.** 2M’s communication of assigned task, action plan and desire to have followers participate in a collaborative environment are an example of *intellectual stimulation* that appears in- and out-of-game. In- and out-of-game 2M found followers ill prepared for meetings. Finding greater value in team members who were prepare to engage in discussion, he would review the previous meetings action plan of assigned tasks and employ what he called the “old shoe shuffle”, a 5-15min stall tactic that allowed individuals to read or get “up to speed” before engaging in conversation. As relayed in his statement, this practice was one he employed In-game and seeing a similar context in his out-of-
game environment employed a similar philosophy, encouraging greater collaboration that was data centered and informed.

For meetings I like to have an action plan at the beginning and at the end of meetings. Just so everyone knows what’s going on and clear on what tasks need to be done and who’s doing them. That’s something I did In-game that I take with me to the workplace. My expectations of players and employees are the same as well, if you expect employees to read your stuff before the meeting starts, you’re a fool, so I do the “old shoe shuffle” to buy them enough time (5-15mins) to get up to speed and start contributing.

*Nurturing success by scaffolding followers.* 1M’s development of processes that scaffold followers towards success is an example of *individualized consideration* that appears in- and out-of-game. Sensitive to the needs of his followers, 1M identified a similarity of context between the struggling In-game player and disheartened writing student. Guided by his values and ethics, he created a nurturing environment that provides the necessary scaffolding for follower success in or out-of-game.

In the fifth fight of heart of fear, some people can figure out the mechanics. Then there’s the other 95% who can’t figure that out. So, as a teacher, I often times have the same problem when explaining a paper. I think its pretty simple but then bring it down step-by-step it becomes easier for my students if I break it down. So, at one point in time, we’re in this fight and this player turned into a goo monster and you have to fight this other goo monster and you have to interrupt your explosion with the explosion of the other goo monsters, all your bars change and all of your abilities change you have to use the new abilities. So it’s a lot to take in and he could just never get it. So, we’re
doing an attempt and finally I said. “No! Just press one in 3,2,1, bam!” and he would push it. Then I would say “Press Two in 3,2,1”. So I just broke it down to the numbers. Some people would go into the background of what happens with amber abilities, and figured he didn’t need to know what it does, he just needed to know when to push the freaking button. So that’s what I would do. All the modes in the world didn’t help him. He (the struggling player) has to realize that this is doable. I think that maybe I stumbled on the bigger point here, which is “when you teach writing, some students just feel they just can’t do it. Then they never do because they feel like they can’t, so they never even try.” Whereas who you are or where you are… if you start writing you’re going to become a better writer. Just by doing it.

Summary of Findings

After a review of all six leadership cases and research questions, there are differences in leadership experiences associated with in- and out-of-game environments. The environment plays a very large role in a leader’s responsibilities, support of guild culture, management or micromanagement of followers and consequences in- and out-of-game. In- and out-of-game environments share a hierarchical leadership structure, but vary greatly in the sharing of responsibilities, inherent to their environment. In game, decisions are made through group or community consensus. Out-of-game, the leader makes decisions with sole responsibility and accountability to the group and its values. A great deal of importance is placed in conforming to the guild culture. Although these values may vary by guild, failure to comply could result in demotion or expulsion. In contrast, employees in the workplace are considerably more diverse. To accommodate the needs of a diverse workforce, a variety of resources are available to followers and leaders, such as training and counseling. Due
special gear, followers encourage leaders to micromanage their activities. Going so far as to provide followers with daily homework assignments and step-by-step directions during In-game battles, leaders have complete control of their followers. Out-of-game, most employees would not tolerate such micromanagement. Lastly, the in- and out-of-game experiences are not equal. Consequences In-game are not as life changing as those experienced out-of-game, allowing for leaders and followers to experiment with new strategies without fear of a permanent or life-ending event. With all the differences between these two environments, a bridge scaffolds leadership characteristics enabling them to appear in- and out-of-game. This bridge consists of two components, the individual’s salient values and relevant contexts found in either environment.

A leader’s commitment to salient values creates a bridging component that enables characteristics of leadership to appear in- and out-of-game. Scaffolded by the leader or community’s commitment to values, a common space (or third place) is created where an alignment of values, which nurture relationships and create a smooth flow of ideas, and expectations. Forming the standards of a leader’s idealized influence (Charisma), these values are what govern their management of a team and their decisions in- and out-of-game. Moving towards a common vision, leaders act to motivate followers (inspirational motivation), encourage greater collaboration (intellectual stimulation) and nurture others (individualized consideration) in support of the values that make each community unique and move towards a common vision. Each leadership characteristic described as part of the third research question was scaffolded by a value, which created a bridge for the characteristic to appear in- and out-of-game. By adhering to her personal philosophy of excellence, 1F’s was able to form successful teams in- and out-of-game. 4M’s sense of service to customers and followers in- and out-of-
game enabled him to motivate followers toward a successful alternative solution. With communication and collaboration as his guiding value, 2M was willing to spend valuable minutes at the beginning of each meeting to ensure followers were prepared to engage and share ideas. 1M’s nurturing values created scaffolding processes or philosophies that empower followers towards success. A second component, which bridges the gap between in- and out-of-game leadership, is the context of the experience.

The context of the experience, not the environment, can create the bridge between in- and out-of-game. Any experience, if found in the opposing environment could be recreated if the relevant context and its components were also available. The four cases used in the third research question can be used to describe how an experiences components and relevant context enables the presence of leadership characteristics in- and out-of-game. 1F describes the formation of an “efficient kitchen staff” (out-of-game) with that of a pickup group (PUG, in-game). The circumstances that form the setting necessary to create a team can be found in either environment. According to 1F what is needed are “people who excel” and the means to recruit these individuals, In-game it’s called a PUG and out-of-game recruiting is accomplished via the institution’s human resources department. 4M describe a circumstance that forms the setting necessary to motivate followers to consider an alternative solution. The components necessary to accomplish this task are compelling data and an excellent communicator. The context surrounding 2M’s example is identical in- and out-of-game, leading a collaborative meeting. Lastly, the creation of a nurturing and supportive setting, which enabled followers to be successful, was the context for informant 1m, with components that took into consideration follower objectives and abilities.
The lived experiences captured in this chapter shows how characteristics of their leadership can be found in- and out-of-game scaffolded by the salient values and relevant context that surrounding the complex concept of leadership. Framed by transformational leadership characteristics, we can see how Massively Multiplayer Online Games can be used as a sandbox for leaders; enabling them to develop and explore new responsibilities; persuade followers to conform and participate in activities; collaborate and think strategically about team goals; and nurture others to develop a more effective and cohesive team. As described as a limitation in Chapter 1, the informants may have formed connections between similar experiences in each environment, which would not have been considered had it not been for this study. To avoid these connections in future studies; researchers may consider refining the data collection process by limiting interviews to in game experiences and comparing them to the informant’s posted workplace duties and responsibilities. For example, asking the informant to describe how he honed his ability to obtain group “buy-in” with in-game peers and followers; and comparing that activity to his workplace role as a sales manager. Regardless of environment, leaders are individuals who influence, inspire, nurture and problem solve to achieve a desired outcome.
Chapter 5. The Big Picture

Given the documented experiences of six leaders, this chapter will discuss how salient values and relevant contexts can add to our knowledge of identity and community pertaining to leadership and games. Using MMOs as a sandbox for leadership, the insights provided in this chapter can help frame the future development of leaders and teams vital to the success of an organization's mission and vision. Broken into three sections, the first section will enhance our understanding of identity and community in- and out-of-games. The second will revisit the importance of games and leadership research. The third will offer some recommendations and closing insights from this study. The three sections are titled “Theories and Concepts”, “Why Games and Leadership Matter” and “Recommendations and Conclusion”.

Theories and Concepts

With the data gathered from leaders, this section will re-examine the relationship between the concepts of identity and community in- and out-of-game. The concepts discussed in this section include projective identity and the appearance of leadership characteristics in- and out-of-game; the relationship between role identities and in game environments that provide immersive leadership experiences. Serving to explain how leadership characteristics can appear in- and out-of-game, the concepts are grouped into three main categories Projective Identity, Role Identities and immersive experiences and MMOs as a third place.

Projective identity. Acting as a bridge between a player’s in game participation and out of game values, the research results described in chapter 4 provide examples supporting Gee’s (2003) theory of projective identity. Two examples involving informant 1M and a Goo monster; and 1F’s blurring of in- and out-of-game perspectives illustrate this concept well. In the example provided by informant 1M where an in game follower was struggling with a Goo
monster, his projective identity was reshaped by a lived experience applicable out of game described in Chapter 4 (Research Question 3, Nurturing success by scaffolding followers). By understanding the similarities in relevant contexts between in- and out-of-game (Goo Monster vs. Writing Assignment), the informant was able to create the appropriate scaffolding for the guild member and his student. Guided by his salient core values of a nurturing leader, 1M displayed characteristics of leadership in game, which later appeared in a similar out of game context. It was the combination of salient values embedded in their projective identity that provides insights to identifying relevant contexts applied out of game. Leaders, such as informant 1F, with powerful salient values find a blurring of in- and out-of-game perspectives, “seeing” relevant contexts everywhere. Integrating her highly salient core values into her identity, informant 1F has difficulty separating her in- and out-of-game self.

Sometimes, it can be hard for me to separate my in-game self with my out-of game self. Its awesome to enter into a game and see a different perspective and say this is not me and I’m trying to think of how I might respond if I were not me. But there is sort of a little core of how I end up dealing with things. I’ve learned a lot about dealing with conflict by learning how to deal with 25 gamers who are like, “I want epic loot! I want to kill a boss!” and “25 students who are like, OMG this is college and I’m freaking out!”  There’s a lot of overlap in how I’ve learned to deal with individuals. I know I keep saying that I’m a shy person, but both experiences have helped me as an individual transform from someone who would barely speak out to coordinate folks into a top 250 US guilds or lead some of the smartest people I’ve ever met. I’m glad I get to do what I do in both places.
Projective identity provides the framework to understanding how 1F was free to explore in game experiences that empower her to overcome her out of game shyness. By exploring lived experiences in game and obtaining the necessary cognitive tools, 1F had reshaped her sense of self in a safe in game environment and applying those scaffolded concepts to her out of game workplace identity. Using this concept a future leader may look specifically for lived in game experiences to overcome perceived challenges associated with identity.

**Role identities and immersive experiences.** Leaders become increasingly committed to role identities and guild values through immersive leadership experiences. Utilizing their out of game skills and abilities, leadership roles may vary in range and complexity. They provide an opportunity for members to hone a skill or leadership characteristic within a relevant context in- and out-of-game. The six informants in this study identified immersive leadership roles, which required their utilization of skills and abilities relevant in- and out-of-game. Informant 1F identified herself as a strategist, mediator and visionary. In this statement, she describes the use of an out of game skill and role (command of the English language and classroom leader) to benefit her in game activities.

> When I think of my strengths, I excel in things like player conflicts. I’m good at mediating. I’ve taken leadership as a strategist for my guild. Strategy meeting before we kill the big dragon, this is what we need to know; this is what different roles are going to be. I need someone to do this particular thing, we need to do this, and here’s the map and this is where everyone needs to stand. I really enjoy that kind of activity. My roles are often time’s strategy and conflict. I also think that, being an English folk and having a good command of the English language, means that when we think of vision in a guild I’m often there with my opinions trying to hone and shape the vision of
the guild and also because I’m bossy and I want the guilds to be something I would like them to be. Strategy, conflict and vision are my things. In contrast, Informant 1M saw his role as one who would coordinate in game activities, scheduling guild members and call outs. This immersive role connected his in- and out-of-game communities.

I do like to also do the callouts and scheduling for other dungeons, especially since I’ve come back (to the game) and also find myself taking on those roles to establish and strengthen virtual and real world connections.

As described in Chapter 4 (Informant Profile: The Faculty Department Chair, Out of Game: Visible Leadership) 1M played a very similar role coordinating the efforts of his out of game peers when interacting with college administration. As a mentor and class leader, informant 2F’s role was also immersive and with the expectation that she would be available to provide advice or intervene on behalf of followers during off hours, out of game and via cell phone (Informant Profile: Technology Professional, In Game: Followers needs). Describing his in game role as that of an eight hour per day “Job”, informant 2M has a focus on recruiting, scheduling and persuading players to show up forraid events.

Getting everyone to show up becomes very important because if you don’t get one or two of the key players in there (tank or healer) you’re not going anywhere. Those are less played roles. Especially in the beginning of an expansion, those roles are in demand and those slots need to be filled not to mention they need to have a certain level of experience. If they don’t know what they’re doing, that can be really tough for a raid to be successful.
A great deal of informant’s role identity was shaped by lived experiences associated with the actions of followers. The example provided by informant 3M describes an example requiring an initial request by a follower, feedback from officers, further discussion as a group and eventual ruling on the request, with expulsion from the guild.

There was this guy who was a shaman and he was raiding with us and a really nice shield dropped. His argument was the shield would benefit him greatly when he was out soloing outside of the dungeon. Almost everyone disagreed and felt that the shield should go to a tank because it should go towards benefiting the raid. It dropped during the raid, so it should benefit the raid. And he was like… yeah but the shield isn’t better than the tank’s existing shield. Sure it’s a little bit better… but it would be a massive improvement for me. Which is a totally valid argument, especially if you want to maximize everyone's gear in the guild. However, the way that he argued it was very clear that he was different from everyone else. He was very inflammatory, defensive and he attacked and insulted everyone in the guild. It just wasn’t civil. Even though his ideas were perfectly fine. His style of argument didn’t fit with the guild so we kicked him out. “You know what, we’ve been trying to talk and reason with you. I understand your position and it makes a lot of sense. Most of the guild disagreed. We’re kicking you out not because we disagree with you. We disagree with how you treat us.“ So, we kicked him out.

Actively engaged in dialog with peers and guided by the values of the community, 3M played a large role in the outcome of that situation. Embracing the experiences of his immersive in game role identity, 4M leveraged his in game insights to out of game contexts benefiting his organization, as described in Chapter 4 (Research Question 3, Motivating others through
reflection). Through the strengthening of these relationships guild members draw upon their community as a source of support and nurturing beyond the confines of the game.

**MMOs as a third place.** The highly social MMOs environment provides an excellent third place to study the relationship-based discipline of leadership. This study found compelling evidence showing the “life cycle” of leaders and followers as they moved from bridging to bonding from within a community (Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006). In this “third place” leaders can explore and formulate their own identity through social and playful interaction within a community (Oldenburg, 1989). Provided are examples where informants used MMOs within their guild culture to nurture some aspect of their identity or values. 1F described a compelling relationship between herself and a friend, who was a former guild member and struggling player. Within the “third place”, 1F provided positive critiques and support until the player developed and left the guild. Because of 1F’s initial interaction and support of the struggling player, the former guild member was now ranked one of best players in the World of WarCraft (Informant Profile: Restaurateur/Part Time Faculty, In Game: Insight Through Reflection). Found in Chapter 4 (Research Question 3, Nurturing success by scaffolding followers), 1M’s example highlights how his experience within the MMO enabled him to utilize an aspect of his transformational leadership characteristic to formulate a solution for a struggling player. Within this “third place”, 2F was able to explore in game tools and techniques to improve her performance, as well as her team. Setting the example as a visible leader, she now employs the same in game research techniques to improve the performance of her workplace team, as describe in Chapter 4 (Informant Profile: Restaurateur/Part Time Faculty, In Game: Insight Through Reflection). 2M have used his in game environment to explore ways to recruit and schedule followers for raid activities (Informant Profile: Director of
Computer Programming, In Game: Encouraging Participation). Founded as a social and
democratic guild, 3MGFW provided activities that encourage the development of in game
relationships, cultivating an environment of a third place. 3M describe his guild’s environment
in the following way.

We did do raiding but we never had enough people to do raiding. At the time it was 40.
We had enough to do 20, but not for the future raids that required 40. It was a guild you
could join where you lay back and have a place to hang out and talk to people as you
were leveling up. We were on a roleplaying server so people would take the time to
socialize. Some of us would just go fishing and just hangout. Sometimes, we would
have events, like we would have foot races from Orgrimmar to Gadgetzan and you could
only go by foot. It was pretty boring running the whole way so it we would be chatting
while we were running. So it was more of a social guild.

As relayed in chapter 4 (Informant Profile: Software Manager and Content Strategist, In Game:
Connecting Group Values, Insight Through Reflection), 4M’s reflection of an in game activity
yielded insights on “turtling” followers and how to overcome what he called, “Alterac Valley
Syndrome”. In this third place, 4M was able to identify and develop a strategy to overcome
followers who refuse to abandon their “safe position”. Given the examples provided by the six
informants, 1F and 2F are developing their Charisma (Idealized Influence); 1M and 3M are
developing how they nurture others (Individualized Consideration); and 2M and 4M continue
inspire others to participate in community activities (Inspirational Motivation). Although
MMOs and guild environments may start out as “neutral ground”, the third place environment
can quickly change depending on the leadership style employed and how participants perceive
their role within the community.
Projective identity, Role identities and the concept of a “third place” within an MMO are powerful tools to understanding the appearance of behaviors and characteristics of leaders in- and out-of-game. Shaped by their salient values, a leader’s projective identity guides decisions made in game, by their out of game self. Informants of this study suggest that the lived experiences found in game can shift their values and hone skills relevant out of game context, such as mediation, mentoring and problem solving. Given what was learned from projective identities, the immersed role identities of leaders are as unique as the leaders themselves. It was their commitment to their role identities and relevant context in an out of game environment that determine if a leadership characteristic appears in both environments. As a sandbox, MMOs are centered on play and a fertile ground for interactions that encourage compelling relationships, making them an excellent third place for leaders.

**Why Games and Leadership Matter**

Given the data and increased understanding of leadership characteristics, this section will describe why nurturing leaders in an MMO is important in the workplace. MMOs contain many of the components necessary for leadership including, but not limited to followers, communication, teams, communities, expertise and challenges. Given the similarities, they provide a rich training ground for future and current leaders to explore techniques in leading, inspiring, nurturing and collaborating with followers. So close is the complexity and similarity found in MMOs with the workplace, it has become a means for informant 4M to sharpen his skills as a leader. The following statement describes how informant 4M used guilds to “practice” concepts and gain insights in leadership for almost a decade.

My wife and I are both MBAs and we did try to run the guild kind of like a business. We thought it was an opportunity to practice. The biggest difference(s)... there are
more consequences at work and I’ve found that its easier to bring people at work around just because the common goals are around the customers.

In the highly immersive in game environment of an MMO, leaders are free to explore alternative solutions and leadership styles without the dangers associated with workplace failure. The knowledge of salient values and relevant contexts act as a bridge between lived in game sandbox experiences and out of game workplace challenges. This section will focus on how in game experiences that provide insights for leaders and communities that scaffold members, aligning their individual values and goals in accordance to their community.

**Leadership insights.** Opportunities of engagement and insight for players are as unique as the makeup of those interacting in game. Scaffolded by values and attentive to the numerous experiences available in game, leaders like informant 4M are committed to their immersive role identities have powerful in game insights, which can be tested and applied in the workplace. In the example below, 4M describes an individual’s behavior called “turtling” seen in- and out-of-game. First seen in game, he studied its effects on followers and how he may utilize his leadership characteristics to overcome what he calls, “Alterac Valley Syndrome”.

The most valuable lesson I learned in WoW was a problem I call Alterac Valley Syndrome. Alterac Valley is a battle ground, player vs. player battle ground and you got originally 40 people, but it got cut down to 25 people. You know alliance vs. horde and there’s two… you know… groups. The horde starts in their base and the alliance start in their base and there are some characteristics of the field that led to certain behaviors that I noticed later on. Basically, the way the alliance fortress works, it was easier to play a defensive role. They would go and camp out at the edge of a bridge. You know the horde would keep pushing through. You know they would try to get across this bridge,
but the alliance had a pretty easy time defending it. The problem is that wasn’t about the
game was really about. It wasn’t about holding your fort; it was about going out and
gaining a bunch of secondary objectives elsewhere on the map. So, if the alliance spent
all their time locked up in their base, or “turtling” as they called it. The horde was out
gathering other resources, winning secondary objectives and basically slowly… very
slowly, winning the game.

Playing careful attention to the effects in game followers, finding an in game solution and
applying them in a relevant context was something described by all informants of this study.
True to his identity as motivator and problem solver, he identified and tested alternative
solutions in game and applied them as a software manager and strategist, as describe in Chapter
4 (Research Question 3, Motivating others through reflection).

**Alignment of values (hardcore vs social).** Built upon social norms and salient values,
a community’s leaders and followers interact to form relationships and engage in lived
experiences. Through these lived experiences followers are shaped by values formed by leaders
and developed through self-discovery. In an effort to manage expectations, the in game values
of a guild are posted on the guild website. Generally, guild’s values towards followers come in
two varieties, social and hardcore.

Social guilds are formed around relationship built within a community. The following
statement comes from informant 2F’s social guild.

Real life matters are more important, please make this a priority over gaming! We will
accommodate situations where real life will interfere with gaming and work with you as
needed. Do not fear repercussion for living life and handling responsibilities.
Activities that social guilds may engage would include, the development of character histories, role playing, or foot races in game, as described earlier in this chapter by informant 3M (MMOs as a third place). As found in this study, Individuals who are leaders in social guilds display high transformational leadership characteristics in Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration. Although other informants may also share the same leadership characteristic traits, they did not specifically identify their guild as a social guild.

Hardcore guilds are formed around the follower conforming explicitly to the needs of the guild in order to be the first to overcome some of the most difficult in game challenges, called heroics. The following statement comes from one of the top hardcore guilds in World of WarCraft.

During progress our raiding schedule is demanding and it is important you understand this. Our progress raids - that you will be expected to attend - can start very early in the day and end late at night. You must be prepared to sacrifice any real life activities in order to ensure attendance.

Activities hardcore guilds may engage in would include, any collaborative or strategic efforts to achieve heroics. A considerable amount of time is invested by each player maximize the effects of their in game gear, with the use of online tools. Of the interviewed participants, none claimed any association to a guild that would be considered hardcore. However, this is an account from informant 2M who described a hardcore guild as a “Gonzo” type.

Some guilds like are the “Gonzo” type and are committed to the guild for an extraordinary amount of time and that’s how they roll. But most guilds aren’t like that; they’re trying to balance guild life with real life. There are enough fun guilds to be in. Some of the crazy guilds aren’t very fun to be in and mistakes aren’t tolerated.
Typically these members of these guilds don’t have much in the realm of social skills. They’re angry obsessed people. Which turns out… is really good in terms of performance. You will absolutely get better if your do them… several hours a day 7 days a week. You will probably become the best there is in that area, you may not have a social life, be an angry human being with an ulcer.

The salient values in the guild have the same focus, their followers. However, how they expect their followers to view in- and out-of-game relationships are very different. The social guild is focused on the well being of the individual in- and out-of-game, specifically saying, “Do not fear repercussion for living life and handling responsibilities”. The hardcore guild on the other hand says, “You must be prepared to sacrifice any real life activities in order to ensure attendance.” When looking at relevant contexts found out of game, organizations or leaders in the workplace may have a very similar environment, where the work place may be described as either social or hardcore. Containing similar views towards followers, social work environments would be nurturing and focused on the well being of their employees. Given that social guilds and workplaces share a common value system, they would also be a greater likelihood of similar relevant contexts, such as planning an informative meeting, as described by informant 2M (Informant Profile: Director of Computer Programming, In Game: Transparency) or the practice of mentoring newcomers into an organization, as described by 2F (Informant Profile: Information Technology Professional, In Game: Data Driven Solutions). Hardcore workplace environments may share a relevant context similar to a prison camp or working under an authoritative leader.

Games and Leadership matter because they provide insights that would benefit small teams integral to the success of any organization and provide an environment that could align
follower values to that of the workplace. The insight provided by 4M reiterated the importance for organizations and their employees to not “turtle up” and enabled the informant to explore alternative solutions to combat what he called, “Alterac Valley Syndrome”. Given his salient values and expertise in his respective field, 4M was able to see and translate the lived experience into a relevant context in the workplace. Secondly, the alignment of leader values or training of employees in immersive in game roles can be an effective ways to develop characteristics of transformational leaders that are charismatic (idealized influence), inspiring (inspirational motivation), problem solving (intellectual stimulation) and nurturing (individualize consideration). Given the ubiquity of the internet and ability for team members to align values and develop relationships regardless of distance, MMOs as a sandbox for leadership may be a viable low cost alternative to community building or executive training sessions prior to leading a team, department or organization.

Discussion

**In and out of game leadership alternatives.** Future studies should consider the exploration of alternative leadership combinations, which may provide some insight on the development of leader identity. These combinations include individuals who were not yet leaders in either environment, and individuals who lead in one but not the other. Given that the primary purpose of MMOs is entertainment, the first combination of individuals who are not yet leaders in either environment will most likely provide us with little or no information about leadership. However, if individuals are followed longitudinually have an interest in leadership, there may be interesting cognitive triggers that can bring about meaningful relationships and salient experiences towards a path of leadership. Once identified these triggers could be introduced into team of non-leaders shaping one or all of them into a future leader. Another
possible combination would be out of game leaders who are not leaders in game. It stands to reason that leaders found in this environment utilize this medium as a means to escape the constraints of their personal and professional world, exploring experiences found in a virtual environment (Turkle, 1995). Although they may not hold a position of in game leadership, their active and passionate participation in a guild may quickly move them to a convergence of success between environments (Brown & Thomas, 2006; Jenkins, 2006). Identifying the lived experience that cause a shift from entertainment to serious play, may provide insight on motivating and engaging reluctant team members towards leadership in the workplace. One intriguing combination is an game leader who is not a leader in the workplace. This individual’s perception as a leader and their journey into the workplace may provide interesting insights on identity and appearance of in game leadership behaviors. According to Yee’s (2006a) demographic study, respondents who credited their leadership to in game play were significantly younger. Although they may not hold a position of leadership in the workplace, their learned in game behaviors of active participation and experiences may create a greater convergence of success between environments (Jenkins, 2006).

Exploring these alternative combinations provide a better understanding of how we view ourselves as leaders. Seeing the similarities of leadership and follower complexities, one informant in this study formed a guild to practice organizational and experience decision-making processes inherent to the workplace. Similar to the workplace, In-game leadership can demand long hours and the resolution of complex problems (Brown & Thomas, 2006; Yee, 2006b). Through the exploration of in and out of game leadership combinations, participants and researchers may uncover interesting cognitive and identity insights of leaders.
Designing in game elements for leadership. This section suggests the development of learning structures from inherent in game elements to nurture leaders. Utilizing the four transformational leadership characteristics as a framework, we recommend participants who engage in the development of leadership to create a guild. The formation of an in game guild provides the best in game opportunity for leaders to explore and nurture emergent leadership behaviors (Wolfenstein, 2010). Although requiring a great deal of time and effort, the creation and maintenance of a guild can provide leadership opportunities with little or no risk to the participant. In an effort to internalize and reflect on lived in game leadership experiences, participants will create a blog or journal as a leader. These behaviors can teach individuals about leadership but create salient experiences that enable participants to BE leaders. Through these designed structures future leaders can learn to nurture characteristics of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

As described earlier in chapter two, idealized influence or charisma is identified as behavior that establishes a philosophy or standard of excellence within the group. Through his actions and decision-making processes, the leader forms a relationship with followers on acceptable social norms and policies. These formal and informal policies that include but are not limited to loot distribution, raid/team formation or officer promotion, set the tone for guild activities. Developing policies and forming teams to achieve a common goal are activities that encourage the development of idealized influence. In a study by Wolfenstein (2010), a participant described the relationship between the values of authoritative leadership on the performance of followers towards a common goal. Leaders in this study also saw how values and leadership philosophy shaped group performance in similar contexts. To further explore idealized influence, leaders should participate in activities and roles that have a relevant
workplace context, such as hiring, firing or developing policies that shape the activities of a group. Taking an active role in these activities, leaders can nurture characteristics that conform to the social norms in the workplace. Utilizing the in game challenges and boss progressions as a means to test leadership processes, a leader can develop skills vital to supporting in game standards, such as policy development, collaboration, adoption and enforcement. The salience of in game experience can cause the appearance of leadership behaviors in a relevant environment, if scaffolded by a strong commitment to values.

The ability to persuade guild members towards a common goal can be described as *inspirational motivation*. Leaders utilize the promise of loot or in game rewards, such as DKP (Dragon Kill Points) to participate in a variety of activities. With the knowledge of each team member’s values, savvy leaders can garner enough support to accomplish any specific goal or task. Aligning an in game team’s abilities with their values, leaders can persuade a team or individual members to abandon a difficult boss challenge to one with lower difficulty (Wolfenstein, 2010). Also seen in this study, one informant persuaded members to stop “turtling” and re-engage in more innovative aspects of their job. Moving team members out of their comfort zone, leaders who hone their inspirational motivation characteristics safeguard the future of their group and financial future of their organization through. The ability to persuade team members based on verifiable evidence plays a key role in this leadership characteristic. Leaders nurturing this characteristic must utilize every opportunity to connect and “sell” a position to followers, using a process that provides an articulate explanation of a given decision. In game elements that utilize this characteristic include new member recruitment or strategist. With Ventrilo, discussion boards or in game chat, leaders must engage in activities that formulate an articulate proposal designed to motivate followers towards a common goal; create
a greater understanding of complex relationships between the leader’s goals and follower’s values; and provide insight to the dynamics of successful negotiations. Applied to a similar context in the workplace, leaders can leverage in game values of success and team building to test arguments and data found in the workplace.

*Intellectual stimulation* or problem solving is a ubiquitous part of a guild leaders’ in game environment. Leaders are faced with challenges ranging from resolving guild conflict to formulating strategies for the next challenge. Taking into account the social norms and policies of the guild, transformational leaders solve problems in support of the needs of the followers and the group. One of the main issues pertaining to problem solving includes the identification and selection of strategic information in support of a guilds raid activities (Wolfenstein, 2010).

In preparation for a raid, leaders gather and identify player attributes and technical in game processes inherent to the success of the group. A highly technical and mechanically complex activity, a raid leader coordinates the activities of a team to ensure the greatest possible chance of success. In alignment to Sun Tzu’s (6th Century BC) teachings, “Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought.” A great deal of preparation in behalf of the leader is necessary to ensure success in or out of game. The in game element of raiding exposes leaders to the complexities of intellectual stimulation. Researching, planning and coordinating raids provide leaders with the fundamental problem solving skills necessary to meeting a common goal or challenge in or out of game. As described in chapter four, leaders take into account the values, skills and abilities of their team; the mechanics and or processes of a given task; and account for all known factors that may contribute to an activity’s success or failure. The wide variety of experiences obtained as a raid leader can be called upon to meet relevant challenges in the workplace.
The transformational leadership characteristic that takes into account the needs of followers is called *individualized consideration*. Leaders who exhibit this characteristic have a genuinely have an interest in the well-being and development of followers. These in game leaders help nurture, players by providing learning opportunities and necessary scaffolding for success. Sensitive to the needs of followers, they engage in dialog and provide relevant experiences to newcomers of the guild, called mentoring. Although not a common practice in “serious raiding” guilds, mentorship is a key factor in many social guilds providing in game play and out of game personal support (Wolfenstein, 2010). Within a guild, newcomers become part of a community of practice; engaging and interacting with potential mentors, class leaders mentors. These leaders are experts in the mechanics of the game and their class, offering support and advice to new guild members or class players. Leaders interested in developing this transformational leadership characteristic will engage in regular dialog with followers in the hopes creating a connection and understanding of their lives. Through this connection enhance their communication and nurturing skills, by providing advice or assistance on a range of topics from conflict resolution to member advocacy to leadership. Informants of this study who engaged in mentorship activities strengthened the guild by scaffolding players with consistent values and perpetuating a sense of community through the alignment individual and group needs.

Utilizing the proposed in game elements, participants may develop transformational leadership characteristics through lived in game experiences. These elements and corresponding leadership characteristics include:

- guild governance for idealized influence,
- new member recruitment/raid strategist for inspirational motivation,
• raid leader for intellectual stimulation, and
• class leader/mentor for individualized consideration.

Through these lived in game experiences and opportunity for reflection, leaders can develop and explore what it means to be a leader and apply those techniques in the workplace. As described in chapter 4, informants transformed their identity as leaders through salient in game experiences. Through those live experiences leaders obtain the necessary scaffolding to have the appropriate transformational leadership characteristics appear in the workplace. Informant 1F considered herself a very shy person. Through her experiences as a guild officer/leader, strategist, raid leader and mentor, she overcame her shyness and applied her newfound confidence in the workplace.

Conclusion

Looking at the Big Picture, this study explored the phenomenon of leadership characteristics appearing in- and out-of-game. In support of this study, theories and concepts were employed to provide a greater understanding on the possible relationships that may be occurring between leaders and followers; and in- and out-of-game environments. The results of the study found that salient values of the leader and relevant contexts are key factors for leadership characteristics to appear in both environments. Given society’s increasingly technology centric play and workplace environment, MMOs can be an excellent sandbox to develop future leaders of teams, which are the lifeblood of any organization. Although created for entertainment, MMOs like World of Warcraft provide rich immersive experiences that allow leaders and followers to create highly complex ecosystems that can mimic some of the largest out of game organizations. This study shows that in game leaders have begun harnessed the inherent complexities in MMOs to “practice” leadership concepts by running a guild “like a
business”. By doing so, they have gained valuable in game insights and later applying them in
the workplace.

Given these insights to games and leadership, further relevant contexts may still be
found in game that may provide a greater understanding to an organizational challenge found in
the workforce. The researcher recommends identifying similar stories (Alterac Valley
Syndrome relayed by informant 4M) that provide insights to business or leadership challenges
not yet identified. Those stories may be found in game, relaying to new or wayward leaders
how they can align their values with their current workplace environment; and explore solutions
introducing transformational leadership characteristics. Possible solutions include focusing on
salient values of leadership attributes an organization wants to cultivate within its leadership
ranks; identifying relevant contexts in both environments which provide immersive and
effective training opportunities; and developing a sandbox for leadership, where leaders learn to
be.

In conclusion, the relationships between a leader’s in- and out-of-game characteristics
pertain to the salient interplay of values and contexts between leader, community and follower.
The complexity of leadership cannot be overstated and the concepts introduced are the first
steps towards a greater understanding of transformational leadership characteristics appearing in
either environment. By understanding ourselves as in game leaders, we may begin to grasp the
process to identify the seemingly infinite variables lived experiences in the workplace.
Knowing how you play is to know yourself.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

Human Subjects Training Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Sean Mendoza successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 06/27/2009

Certification Number: 250263
APPENDIX B

Graduate and Professional Schools IRB Initial Application

Checklist

Please use this checklist to complete the application procedures for submission of your initial Full, Expedited or Exempt proposal for IRB review.

The following materials are to be submitted to the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB (GSP IRB) Office:

_____ 1. Cover letter to the GPS IRB indicating the following:

______ 1. the applicant has read and will act in accordance with the ethical principles for human research protections (Psychology faculty, staff and students need to add: and as established by the American Psychological Association for conducting research with human participants);

______ 2. if applicable, applicant must state she/he has not violated any copyright laws in the use of the instruments for the proposed study (and state that she/he will either purchase instruments or provide copy of permission to use instrument from the copyright holder);

______ 3. if applicable, the applicant has fulfilled any departmental requirements (e.g., passed the preliminary oral exam); and

______ 4. the applicant may add any additional information that is felt pertinent to the IRB application that is not otherwise addressed (e.g., approval received from another IRB).

(15 copies for Full Applications; 2 copies for Expedited and Exempt Applications; 1 electronic copy)

_____ 2. Faculty Supervisor Review form completed and attached (if applicable) (15 copies for Full Application; 2 copies for Expedited and Exempt Applications)

_____ 3. IRB Educational component(s) completed by the principal investigator and all members of research team, including the faculty supervisor (if applicable)

______ A. Certificate(s) of completion of human subjects training completed

______ B. Certificate(s) of completion of HIPAA education completed (if applicable)

(1 copy for Full, Expedited and Exempt Applications)

_____ 4. The IRB Application (Exempt or Expedited/Full) appropriate for the type of research that is proposed, including:
(1) Section 1 of the IRB application should be written to be understandable to individuals who do not have a background in your area of study, and do not have training in research methods. It should put the proposed study into context, with references to the scholarly literature.

(2) A full set of appendices of materials disseminated to the subjects during recruitment, consenting, data collection, and debriefing.

(3) Additional required documents, such as permission to use copyrighted materials, permission to access a data archive, permission to recruit subjects from a site, IRB approval from another institution (Note: such documentation is required before final IRB approval can be given).

(4) Informed consent process and form (and assent form, if applicable) (or Application for waiver or alteration of consent process) Please see Section VIII of the manual for components of informed consent to include.

(5) HIPAA applicability and procedures addressed. If HIPAA applies to the proposed study, either:

   a. Waiver of Authorization form attached; or
   b. Authorization form attached

(6) Security of data procedures which include:

   a. Storing data securely for 5 years (or 6 years if study falls under HIPAA) then destroyed
   b. Maintaining separation of subject identity from subject data
   c. If data are going to be archived for use by other investigators in the future, need to delineate the terms of data access and use

(7) All required signatures
5. Dissertation proposal or other research proposal, which includes all instruments and materials to be used in the recruitment of subjects and in the conducting of the research.

6. A separate copy of only the Method section of a dissertation proposal, or a statement summarizing the methods of the proposed study.

7. Have all procedures been taken to ensure the protection and dignity of all subjects with whom you will have contact and/or whose data you may use?

Thank you! If you have any questions about this checklist or process, please contact the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB Office. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.
APPENDIX C
Letter to In-Game Participants
Informed Consent Letter

XX/XX/XXXX

Dear In-game Leader participant,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Learning Technology program at Pepperdine University conducting research for my dissertation. The topic of my dissertation is the transference of leadership identity from in-game environments. You have been invited to voluntarily participate in my study, but are in no way obligated. In addition, prior to giving your approval I ask that you have no additional protocols to be filed with your institution or business, apart from the IRB that has already been filed and approved through Pepperdine University.

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between in- and out-of-game behaviors in an MMO, specifically in the realm of transformational leadership. This study will help develop an understanding of identity formation in online environments and its application to out-of-game settings.

Your participation in this study is a two-part process. The first portion is the completion of a Multifactor Leadership questionnaire taking no more than 20 minutes to complete and provide your perception of your leadership style. The second portion is a two-part interview (completed via Skype or in person). You will be asked to share your leadership experiences within an MMO taking no more than one hour. The second interview will require you to share your experience as a leader in you place of work. There is minimal risk to participants in this study. The study presents no more risk to participants than what may be encountered during their professional work: potential fatigue from time and effort, and potential discomfort from reflection on their in- and out-of-game experiences. As the facilitator, I can assure you that your identity will be confidential and no identifying factors will be revealed. As a fellow gamer and technology professional, your identity and experiences are an important part of who you are.

All information you provide will remain confidential. The survey will not retain any personal or electronic information about you. Upon your permission to electronically record the interview, audio files and transcriptions will only be found on encrypted laptops or flash drives and deleted upon completion of the data analysis. Only I have access to your survey, interviews, data sheets and participant list. I will only report data in summary form and will not report individual scores.

Please note that your completion and submission of the electronic survey indicates your consent to participate.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any time or refuse to take part in any activity in which you feel uncomfortable. It is my responsibility to answer
questions and concerns about the study and you have the right to request a summary or copy of the results of the study.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email (sean.mendoza@pepperdine.edu) or phone [redacted] Thanks you for time and participation.

Sincerely,

Sean HV Mendoza
Learning Technology Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University
APPENDIX D

Online Survey

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

(Statements below are a sample of the MLQ (Form 5X) survey from http://www.mindgarden.com/copyright.htm#sample)

1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts
2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate
3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious
4. I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards
5. I avoid getting involved when important issues arise

*Permission to put Sample Items into a Dissertation or Thesis*

Permission to put sample items of an instrument into a dissertation or thesis appendix is provided when license to reproduce is purchased. This provides permission for up to five sample items to show the characteristics of the instrument. Mind Garden will only provide permission for up to five sample items. Even if permission is given for up to five sample items for reproduction, they should not represent a whole scale (e.g., the MLQ has four item scales). The goal is to provide an example of content, not to provide a usable scale.
To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for the above named person to use the following copyright material for his/her research:

Instrument: *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*

Authors: *Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass*

Copyright: *1995 by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass*

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any published material.

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

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Published by Mind Garden, Inc., www.mindgarden.com
Thank you for taking the Avatar Demographic Survey. Please answer the questions in the survey as completely and honestly as you can — there are no right or wrong answers. Simply answer the questions as best you can, and please ask the survey administrator if you have any questions. For each question please circle the ONE answer that best fits.

Your Main Character’s Sex: Male Female

Your Main Character’s Class (Please write your character’s class):

Your Main Character’s Race (Please write your character’s race):

Your Main Character’s Guild Affiliation:

Approximately how long have you played the game (IN DAYS)?

Approximately how long have you played Main Character (IN DAYS)?

Approximately how much time per week do you spend logged into the game (IN HOURS)?

Please rate your expertise with respect to your Main Character:
Beginner Competent Proficient Expert

Please rate your expertise with MMOGs in General:

Beginner Competent Proficient Expert

1. What’s your role in the main guild you play, in [guild name] in the game World of Warcraft?
   
   Probes:
   
   a. Prior to your current position, can you describe your previous roles and positions held in your current or previous guilds?
   
   b. What was your first in-game leadership experience?
   
   c. Can you tell me of an in-game failure that shaped you as a leader?

2. Do you have a guild title? e.g. Guild master, raid leader, tell me about that.

   Probes:
   
   a. Have you ever experienced an opportunity to step up into a leadership role even though it was NOT explicitly part of your position?
   
   b. How would you describe your management role at your guild? Is it limited or do you have the freedom to implement a vision or affect change?
3. What is your role in guild activities?

Probes:

a. Do you schedule and invite members for raids/dungeons/social activities? Tell me about that.

b. Do you organize the raid group and assign roles? e.g. who’s healing the tank, who’s healing the party? Tell me about that.

c. Do you study strategies, lead conversations, and inform players about an upcoming boss? Tell me about that.

d. Do you promote members in [guild name]? Assign duties such as clearing out the guild bank or providing raid consumables? Tell me about that.

e. Do you help guide goals, directions or vision of the group?

4. What role do you have in dealing with guild members?

Probes:

a. Have you ever had to deal with conflicts in the guild or in a raid party? Tell me about that.

b. Have you ever kicked anyone off a raid or out of the guild? Tell me about that.

c. Have you ever struggled to keep together a group (after multiple wipes or splintering guild)? Tell me about that.

d. Have you been involved in mentoring new players or players new to their class? Tell me about that.

5. Is there an aspect of your out-of-game (in your workplace) leadership experience that you call upon in your in-game environment? If so, in what context?
APPENDIX F

Leadership Identity Protocol Instrument

Individual Demography Interview

Thank you for taking the Individual Demographic Survey. Please answer the questions in the survey as completely and honestly as you can — there are no right or wrong answers. Simply answer the questions as best you can, and please ask the survey administrator if you have any questions. For each question please circle the ONE answer that best fits.

Your sex: Male  Female

Your age (Please write in your age): _________

Race: White Black or African-American Native American or Alaska Native

Asian Hispanic or Latino Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Two or More Races Other

How often do you use the Internet (the internet includes the web, email, & instant messenger)?

Never About once a month Once a week Several times a week Every day

How often do you use information exchange sites like forums, wikis or blogs?

Never About once a month Once a week Several times a week Every day

How often do you use a social networking site like MySpace or Facebook?
How often do you play massively multiplayer online role-playing games like World of Warcraft?

- Never
- About once a month
- Once a week
- Several times a week
- Every day

How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

- 0 hrs
- 1 – 5 hrs
- 6 – 10 hrs
- 11 - 20 hrs
- 20+ hours

How would you rate your OVERALL technological abilities?

- Beginner
- Competent
- Proficient
- Expert

As a leader in your organization, how many people do you directly or indirectly supervise? ____

*Reflection statement/question:* When we last talked, you mentioned your guild actions and the roles you play within your guild. As you think about the things we’ve discussed in the previous interview, do you feel there is any overlap or parallels in your relationship and/or experiences between guild members and out-of-game experiences at work?

1. How many employees are part of your team? What’s the name of the company or institution in which you are employed? What is your role as a leader in your organization?
   
   Probes:
   
   a. Prior to your current position, can you describe your previous roles and positions held?
b. What was your first leadership experience in the workplace?

c. Can you tell me of a “failure” in your current or past workplace that shaped you as a leader?

2. What is your operational title? e.g. Supervisor, Manager, Dean, President

Probes:

a. Have you ever experienced an opportunity to step up into a leadership role even though it was NOT explicitly part of your position?

b. How would you describe your management role at your organization? Is it limited or do you have the freedom to implement a vision or affect change?

3. What is your role in your organization/department?

Probes:

a. Do you schedule and/or invite other departments to participate in projects or initiatives? Tell me about that.

b. Do you organize the team group and assign roles? e.g. who is coordinating operations, communicating to administration? Tell me about that.

c. Do you execute or provide research, lead conversations, and inform team members about an upcoming project important to your department or institution? Tell me about that.

d. Do you promote members in of your department or institution? Assign administrative, operational or communications duties? Tell me about that.

e. Do you help guide goals, directions or vision of the group?
4. What role do you have in dealing with department, or employees in your institution?

Probes:

a. Have you ever had to deal with departmental or institutional conflicts? Tell me about that.

b. Have you ever fired anyone? Tell me about that.

c. Have you ever struggled to keep your project team on task? Tell me about that.

d. Have you been involved in mentoring new employees in your organization of department? Tell me about that.

5. Is there an aspect of your in-game leadership that you call upon in your out-of-game workplace environment? If so, in what context?
APPENDIX G

Email/Letter Soliciting Participants
Introduction Letter

Sean H.V. Mendoza  
Learning Technology Doctoral Candidate  
Pepperdine University

Greetings (Raid/Guild Leader),

My name is Sean HV Mendoza, a Learning Technology doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University interested in connecting with in-game leaders who are also out-of-game leaders, for a research study.

Today’s in- and out-of-game organizations understand that “leadership can no longer exist only at the top of the organization, but must also be distributed throughout the organization and shared with teams.” It is through the empowerment of smaller teams organizations can simultaneously nurture innovation while managing their bottom lines.

It is my hope that by exploring the relationship of in and out-of-game leadership behaviors in World of Warcraft, we can utilize MMOs as a sandbox for developing and current leaders. This study will provide some insights to participant’s leadership style and greater awareness to team dynamics in multiple worlds.

If you or anyone you know fits the following criteria:

In-game
  • Active two year member of your guild
  • Current or pass raid or guild leader

Out-of-game
  • Manages or supervises no fewer than three employees in the workplace
  • Must work in a leadership role for no less than two years

and would be willing to participate in this study, please contact Sean HV Mendoza at sean.hv.mendoza@gmail.com to receive a letter of consent. Your privacy is important to us and all information will be confidential. You can at any time leave this study.

Respectfully,
Sean HV Mendoza
APPENDIX H

GPS IRB Exemption Notice

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

June 18, 2013

Sean Mendoza

Protocol #: E051D05
Project Title: Massively Multiplayer Online Games as a Sandbox for Leadership

Dear Mr. Mendoza,

Thank you for submitting your application, Massively Multiplayer Online Games as a Sandbox for Leadership, for exempt review to Pepperdine University’s Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Linda Polin, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - http://www.nihtraining.com/chapter/guidelines/45Cfr46.html) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (4) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101(b), research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior; unless: a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Category (4) of 45 CFR 46.101(b), research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

In addition, your application to waive documentation of consent, as indicated in your Application for Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent Procedures form has been approved.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a Request for Modification Form to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under
exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual (see link to “policy material” at http://www.pepperdine.edu/IRB/Graduate).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Veronica Jimenez, GPS IRB Manager at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Doug Leigh, Ph.D.
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
    Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs
    Linda Polin, Graduate School of Education and Psychology