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## Scouts BSA Wood Badge Through the Lens of Senge's Disciplines of a Learning Organization

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Scouts BSA Wood Badge

Through the Lens of Senge's Disciplines of a Learning Organization

by

Wendy Rosekrans Marik

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctorate in Education.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

January 2022

Dissertation Chair: Trish Harvey

Reader: Jacquelyn Stevens

Reader: Michael Westfall

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## ABSTRACT

Marik, W. R. Scouts BSA Wood Badge Through the Lens of Senge's Disciplines of a Learning Organization (2022)

This qualitative case study used researcher participation, participant surveys and participant interviews to explore the presence of the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge in 2021. It also examined how the prevalence of Senge's five disciplines affected Scouters' perceptions of Wood Badge training. The study included survey results from 30 participants and interviews with four participants at Northern Star Council's Wood Badge course in 2021. Findings indicated that all five of Senge's disciplines were present in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge course. The study confirmed that Scouts BSA is a learning organization.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my daughter, Hannah. Thank you for your willingness to study with me and your understanding when mom had school. Thank you for your patience and unconditional love as I took this journey and introducing me to the world of scouting as you took your journey to being a member of the Inaugural Class of Female Eagle Scouts - February 8, 2021.

Thank you to my sisters and parents who read random chunks of writing throughout my years of coursework and attempted to give feedback so that I could find those gaps and your patience in pointing out sentences that did not make sense.

Thank you to my cohort for your relentless prodding and support so that we can all cross this finish line. We lost some amazing people during our journey and I will not forget what I learned from SueAnn and Andrea, as well as all of you, as we grew through sharing.

*I used to be a Fox, And a good ol' Fox too,  
But now I've finished Foxing, I don't know what to do,  
I'm growing old and feeble,  
And I can Fox no more,  
So I'm going to work my Ticket if I can.  
Back to Gilwell, Happy Land,  
I'm going to work my Ticket if I can.*

The Wood Badge Song

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

"People ask the difference between a leader and a boss  
...the leader leads and the boss drives."

Theodore Roosevelt  
Binghamton, NY  
October 24, 1910  
(as cited in Scott, 2008, p. 72)

#### Chapter Overview

Chapter one provides a general introduction to the topic and research questions. The chapter begins with a general overview of the topic followed by discussions of the professional and personal interest in the topic and then the context and importance of the research topic to the field. The primary research question of this study is: *In what ways are the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization present in the training of adult volunteer leaders (Scouters) in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge?* The secondary research question of this study is: *How does the prevalence or absence of each of Senge's five disciplines affect Scouters' perceptions of Wood Badge training?* The chapter provides a brief overview of Senge's five disciplines and definitions of key terms that will be used throughout the research.

#### General Overview

Scouts BSA, formerly Boy Scouts of America, has been in existence 110 years. Leadership training and development for youth around the world has been the main focus of scouting for over one hundred years. The training of adults to act as leaders and

mentors for today's youth outside of the school structure has been increasingly scrutinized. Despite being a program focused on the development of youth, scouting has a robust training program for the many adult volunteers. All leadership training programs are not alike and can take many approaches. Senge describes learning organizations being built by the continual expansion of people's capacities to create desired results through collaboration (2006, p3). This study viewed Scouts BSA as a learning organization and looked at Scouts BSA's top level adult leadership training program, Wood Badge. Wood Badge is a longer-commitment leadership program for staff and volunteers that goes beyond the basics of what is needed to run a Scout Troop. This research leveraged not only the researcher's personal experience in the program but also interviewed peers and course trainers about their experiences. Because Scouts BSA can be viewed as a learning organization and Senge was used as the primary text around learning organizations in my graduate coursework, Senge was used as the base for this study.

Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (2006) presented five disciplines: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building a Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking. The ability to successfully navigate these disciplines is vital to the success of a team and demonstrates that it is a learning organization. The fact that these disciplines are not explicitly listed as part of the expected outcomes for the Wood Badge program does not mean they are not present as part of a successful leadership training program, and this study will examine if they are present. Wood Badge's purpose is to ensure adult volunteers are prepared to become stronger leaders and can build strong teams throughout the scouting programs. The

following is an examination of why I hold this belief as a scout leader, educator, and learner.

### **Professional/Personal Interest in the Topic**

I am a lifelong learner and am constantly looking for new opportunities to expand my learning in new and different ways. When Boy Scouts of America changed to Scouts BSA and expanded their program to include females in February 2019, my daughter joined the ranks of female scouts and I became involved as a parent volunteer. Scouts BSA has an extensive training program for its volunteers and leaders. While other programs I have volunteered with have had some training or have leveraged certification programs from other organizations, Scouts BSA has some mandatory trainings and some optional trainings as part of their programming.

As a lifelong learner, I have voluntarily taken leadership training through multiple pathways. Besides my Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science and my Master's in Education, I also have over a year of coursework toward a Master's in Organizational Leadership. Right out of college I took a full-length Stephen Covey course on Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (Covey, 1989); more recently I earned a Certificate of Authentic Leadership from St. Catherine University. I have held a myriad of certifications from Lifeguarding, First Aid and CPR to Scuba Diving, Ski Patrol and Ski Instructor. Most recently I obtained Project Management Professional Certification from the Project Management Institute. These many avenues have exposed me to a wide variety of leadership and training programs.

Now that I am involved with scouts, I have taken multiple base-level trainings as an adult volunteer and then progressed to the mandatory training, Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS), for anyone serving as a troop leader (Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster). The next step in adult volunteer training after IOLS is Wood Badge. The myriad of opportunities that Scouts BSA offers to their adult volunteers and the structure of allowing for growth and change over time, led me to view Scouts BSA as a learning organization. When I studied learning organizations in my doctoral program, I was drawn to Senge as a lens through which learning organizations can be analyzed. So as I headed into that next level of training, I wondered how well does Wood Badge align with Senge's leadership disciplines that I have been studying in my doctoral coursework?

### **Context and Importance of the Research Topic to the Field**

From both educator and learner perspectives, I have a strong belief that leadership training is not just about management and theory. Organizations are considered genuinely effective if they prepare members not only to fulfill the requirements of the organization itself, but also to create a ripple impact on the larger community.

What if practices that have proven to be effective methods for successful business organizations are actually present in volunteer organizations such as Scouts BSA as well? This is central to my research question as I look at the Wood Badge program as a reflection of Scouts BSA as a learning organization. According to *The History of Wood Badge in the United States*, there is a lack of scientific research validating that Wood Badge develops leaders (Davis, 1990, p. 52). More recently, Scouts BSA has been conducting the Building Evidence in Scouting Together (BEST) Study. The BEST Study

goals include: “Understanding how adult leaders' training and Scouting experiences relate to positive youth outcomes; identifying how adult leadership and training impact youth development; and improving the Scouts BSA program” (Montclair State University, 2019, p. 1). The goals of the BEST study are much broader than this study, however, this study is well aligned with Scout BSA’s call of additional research into adult leadership. This study explored how Senge’s five disciplines reveal themselves in the Wood Badge training program.

All adults do not learn in the same way. Wood Badge is structured in a way that allows participants to leverage their interests to guide the ways they acquire leadership skills. John Andrews, Scout Executive of Northern Star Scouting stated in the opening of the Wood Badge Participant Handbook that “Skills presented, practiced, and learned will not just prove beneficial to you, but directly to the youth of Scouting” (as cited in North Star Scouting, 2021, p. 6). The program empowers participants to align their learning styles, interests, and Course Director expectations. There are multiple Wood Badge Courses offered throughout the country every year, and a Course Director is the person in charge of running that particular Wood Badge Course. Wood Badge provides adults with an opportunity to learn skills beyond what they have learned in school or required trainings for their positions; it offers a chance to develop life skills.

I am an advocate for lifelong learning for adults and youth. I practice this myself as seen in my continued education and participating in trainings. I also advocate this for my child. When my daughter comes home with grades, she knows my questions will be centered on how well she understands the content, not about if it is an A or not. Points

lost due to copy errors or spelling are not as critical as points lost to lack of comprehension. She knows that despite an A on a test, if she did not understand a certain concept she still has learning to do. In my opinion, this is a very different approach than that which much of today's education is structured around and differs from what society values as a whole, but it is fundamental to laying a foundation for lifelong education. Wood Badge is one such opportunity for lifelong learning.

In order to research the correlation between Wood Badge and the disciplines of a learning organization, I surveyed participants who were new to Wood Badge as well as participants who were leading others through Wood Badge (second, third or even fourth time on course). I worked through the Northern Star Council of Scouts BSA to gain access to participants of the Wood Badge program. All of the survey respondents and interviewees voluntarily responded to my questions. I believe in the value of this approach both as a participant and as a researcher.

With my vast background in assessment, I have experience with using an objective lens as well as analyzing and documenting biases. For more than twenty years I have worked in the field of educational assessment at a privately-held company that contracts with states across the nation providing state-wide standardized tests to meet their annual federal accountability requirements. My background in statewide standardized testing has taught me to minimize bias when implementing a standards-based rubric to constructed responses. Because of this experience, I believe that I was able to code interview responses honestly. After scoring millions of assessment responses according to state-selected rubrics, I am confident that I was an objective

listener to the participants. The research was done via video-conference creating a consistent environment for all interviews, so this also helped me maintain objectivity. On the flip side, by not interviewing in person, I may have missed subtle things that were not explicit during my interviews and when reviewing the surveys.

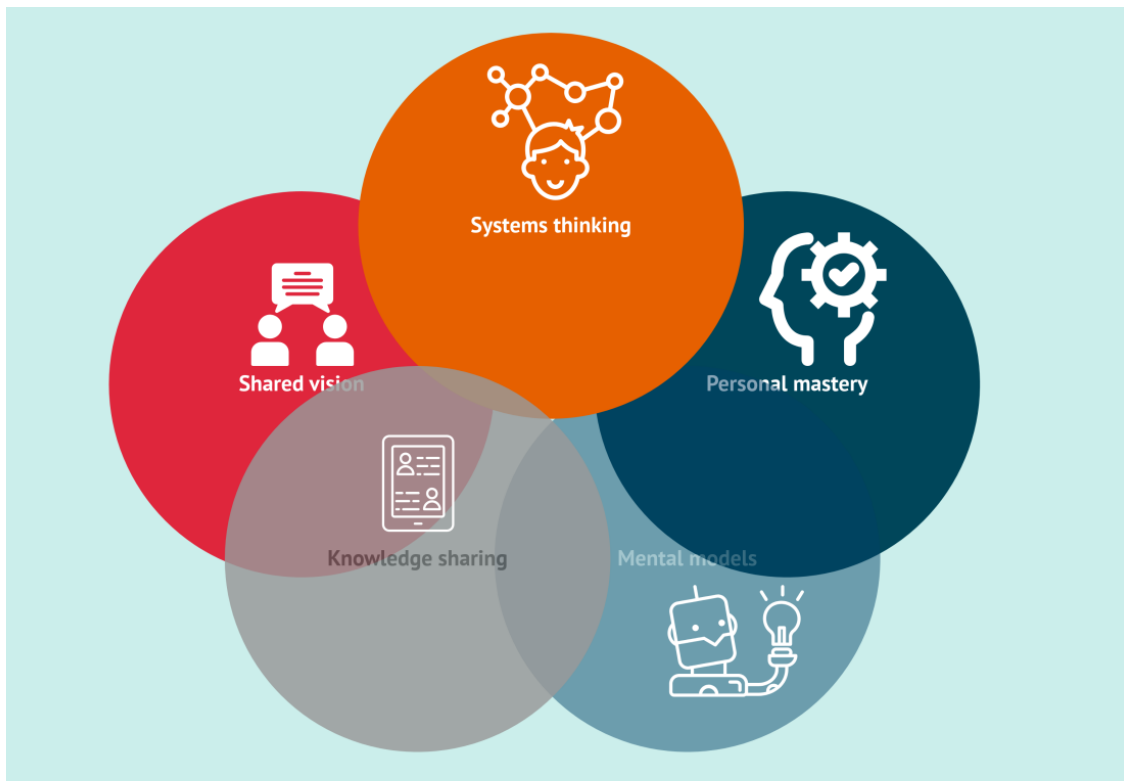
To unpack my philosophical orientation, I reviewed Creswell's (2007) philosophical worldviews. I aligned most closely with postpositivism, which is comprised of determination, reductionism, empirical observation and measurement, and theory verification. "Postpositivists hold a deterministic philosophy in which causes (probably) determine effects or outcomes...identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 7). Using my results, I will be looking at whether or not Wood Badge does or does not align with Senge's disciplines of a learning organization.

### **Senge's Five Disciplines**

In his book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Senge (2006) presented five disciplines that are present in successful learning organizations. *Personal Mastery* is an individual's commitment to becoming proficient through lifelong learning. *Mental Models* are someone's individual constructs that stem from their cultural foundations and the lens through which they view the world. *Building Shared Vision* is the glue that cements the team around a common set of principles and guiding practices. *Team Learning* is the way that the team as a unit builds knowledge faster than the individual team members build their personal knowledge. *Systems Thinking* is the way in which a business or other organization is interconnected and functions as a whole (Senge, 2006).

**Figure 1**

*Senge's five disciplines of a learning organization are shown as interconnected.* (Four Week MBA, 2021)



Senge's text has been widely used to analyze schools and businesses as learning organizations and that is where I had first used it as well. However, as my involvement in Scouting grew, I realized that the leadership training I was receiving through Scouts BSA was as valuable as the professional development available in businesses and schools. However, little has been written about its effectiveness. Senge's work applies not just to educational and professional organizations, but to nonprofit, volunteer-staffed organizations such as Scouts BSA as well. The founder of Wood Badge, Robert



Baden-Powell, recognized that the professional development of leaders was important and began the Wood Badge program (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 11). One hundred years later, there is still recognized value in this training, and Senge's five disciplines is the lens through which Scouts BSA as a learning organization will be examined.

Scouts BSA is an organization with a long history and many terms that, while part of the universal language for participants, may be unfamiliar to readers of this dissertation. Therefore, to create a common ground, some key scouting terms used throughout this paper are listed here.

### **Key Terms**

**Chartered Organization** — a community organization that hosts a Scout Troop or Unit

**On Course** — the period of time that someone is participating in the in-person session of Wood Badge

**Participant** — an individual adult attending Wood Badge

**Patrol** — a group of six to eight Scouts

**Scout** — a youth aged eleven to eighteen years and registered with Scouts BSA

**Scouter** — an adult volunteer registered with Scouts BSA

**Ticket** — a set of five goals (ticket items) a Wood Badge participant sets and fulfills in order to complete Wood Badge

**Troop/Unit** — a group of youth participants and adult leaders that meet for Scouting at a chartered organization

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study is to explore the five disciplines of Senge's learning

organization observed in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge in 2021. Over the past 111 years, Scouts BSA has been on the leading edge of training youth to become future leaders as well as expanding leadership growth for adults involved in the program as well. There is a desire to ensure that these training opportunities continue to be beneficial and guide Scouts BSA through the next 100 years. Through participation in Wood Badge, along with surveys and interviews of participants, this study takes a deeper dive into Wood Badge training.

Chapter Two provides some background with a history and description of Scouts BSA, a history and evolution of Wood Badge, and description of Senge's disciplines of a learning organization. Chapter Three describes the methods used to collect data and analyze it for this study. Chapter Four contains the results of that data analysis, the themes that resulted from the analysis, and evidence to support those conclusions. Chapter Five makes known any limitations to the study and provides recommendations for further research in addition to the conclusion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

“The challenge for every community is not so much to have a vision of what it wants to become, or a plan, or specific timetables. The real challenge is to discover and create the means for engaging citizens that brings a new possibility into being...what gives power to communal possibility is the imagination and authorship of citizens led through a process of engagement.”

Peter Block (2008, p. 79)

#### Chapter Overview

In order to answer the primary research question, *In what ways are the five disciplines of Senge’s learning organization present in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA’s Wood Badge?*, and the secondary research question, *How does the prevalence or absence of each of Senge’s five disciplines affect Scouters’ perceptions of Wood Badge training?*, this chapter builds a foundation through a history and description of Scouts BSA, a history and evolution of Wood Badge, and a description of Senge’s disciplines of a learning organization

Using personal experience in the training, review of the training materials, and interviews of participants, I worked to identify the ways in which Scouts BSA Wood Badge training aligns with Senge’s five disciplines of a learning organization. In Zucker’s (2009) article, “How to Do Case Study Research”, the literature is reviewed for definitions, looking for patterns and conceptualization. Grimm and Dietz researched volunteerism in the United States and found that “31 states experienced significant declines in volunteering between 2004 and 2015, while not one state experienced a significant increase in volunteering over that time period” (2018, p. 1). The shrinking base of adults willing to volunteer has increased the need for valuable learning

opportunities and this research provides justification of the value-add of Wood Badge to Scouts BSA.

### **Scouts BSA**

This section provides an overview of Scouts BSA, the history of scouts, the foundational Tenets of Scouting. It then discusses the patrol method that is used in scouting and how training is implemented in scouting. The last part of this section provides a general overview of the Wood Badge program and its history.

#### ***What is Scouts BSA?***

Scouts BSA, formerly known as Boy Scouts of America, is a national organization that works to help today's youth be their best selves right now and grow into their very best future selves. Scouts teaches youth to become stronger physically and mentally along with practicing leading themselves and others (Scouts BSA, 2019, p. 8). The Scouts BSA program involves hands-on learning and achievement that prepares youth with a variety of skills. In addition to the rank requirements, there are over 135 merit badges that teach specific interest areas.

Rank Requirements are the basic trail a scout follows as they advance through the program. The initial step after joining a troop is for a youth to earn Scout rank. This rank involves reciting and understanding the Tenets of Scouting (outlined later in this chapter). Scouts will also learn about the program in general, learning how the ranks and merit badges function. The next ranks that a scout works through, in order, are Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class. These three ranks ensure the youth completes requirements in the following areas: Aquatics, Camping, Citizenship, Cooking, Emergency

Preparedness, First Aid, Fitness, Hiking, Leadership, Nature, Navigation, Outdoor Ethics, Personal Safety, Scout Spirit, and Tools (including knots) (Scouts BSA, 2019). Following First Class, a scout works their way through Star Rank and then Life Rank, which combined require earning eleven merit badges, serving a minimum of an additional ten months as a leader in your troop, and 12 additional hours of community service including conservation hours. The final rank is Eagle Scout which requires a total of 21 merit badges, 13 of which are required, an additional six months of leadership and the completion of an Eagle Scout Project. The service project helps an organization in your community outside of Boy Scouts and requires planning, presentations, and leadership of others.

Merit badges are focused on learning more about specific topics. There are more than 135 merit badges currently offered. To become an Eagle Scout, a youth must complete a minimum of 21 of these badges, however, there are some scouts that complete all of them. The merit badges offer a wide range of opportunities including First Aid, Robotics, Scuba Diving and Art. Each merit badge has a merit badge counselor, who is an adult approved by the local council to guide youth through the requirements for that specific badge. These Scouters have specific skill sets that enable them to teach that badge to the youth. For example, because I hold a Master's in Education and am a former teacher, I am a Scholarship Merit Badge Counselor.

### ***History of Scouts***

The Scouting movement was started in England by Robert Baden-Powell. British youth that were being called to fight in the army were thought to be not fit enough to

fight (Boy Scouts of America, 2010, p. 7). Baden-Powell became a national hero after successfully defending the city of Mafeking in the Boers Wars. During his time in the Army, Baden-Powell wrote a manual called *Aids to Scouting*, and, once he became famous, boys throughout England bought the book and started playing soldiers in their towns and neighborhoods. In 1903, he returned to England and after seeing what was happening, he created a version of his book specifically for younger boys called *Scouting for Boys*. In 1907, Baden-Powell held his first camp on Brownsea Island. Scouting had its start (Boy Scouts of America, 2010, pp. 8-9).

*Scouting for Boys* was picked up and used by Americans as early as 1908, as troops were founded in places as far flung as Kentucky and Oklahoma. According to the Scouting Heritage Merit Badge Pamphlet, at least 1.7 million American children, 16 or under, worked full time on farms and in factories up to 12 hours a day (Boy Scouts of America, 2010, p. 7). Around the same time, both Ernest Thompson Seton and Daniel Carter Beard created programs for teen boys to spark an interest in the outdoors in their respective communities. Seton founded the Society of Woodcraft Indians in Connecticut. Seton was a wildlife artist who also wrote about animals. He invited a group of boys to tear down a fence on his property and invited them to camp there. While there, they formed a tribe, elected leaders and learned outdoor skills from Seton. Started in July 1902, this evolved into Woodcraft Indians. He wrote a book, *The Birch-Bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians* in 1906 and Baden-Powell used it for reference when creating his own handbook (Boy Scouts of America, 2010, p. 10).

Around that same time, 1905, Daniel Carter Beard created a boys program, Sons of Daniel Boone, to teach camping and nature skills. This group was renamed Pioneers of America and he published a handbook in 1909, *Boy Pioneers and Sons of Daniel Boone* (Boy Scouts of America, 2010, p. 11). That same year, a prominent businessman traveling in London was helped with directions by a young boy who stated that he was just doing his daily good turn. Intrigued by this idea, William D. Boyce founded Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910 (Boy Scouts of America, 2010, p. 14). Ernest Thompson Seton and Daniel Carter Beard joined forces with Boy Scouts of America and merged their respective groups into the single program.

Theodore Roosevelt was an avid supporter of the Boy Scout movement, going so far as to write a letter of endorsement to the first Chief Scout Executive James E. West in December 1915. In that letter, Roosevelt stated it was imperative that those involved with scouting develop leaders “of strong, wholesome character, of unmistakable devotion to our country, its customs and ideals as well as in soul and by law citizens” (as stated in Scott, 2008, pp. 92-93). “Roosevelt saw that the Boy Scouts of America could create better citizen-leaders through strict adherence to its core tenets expressed in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto: "Be Prepared," and, eventually, the “Outdoor Code” (Scott, 2008, xviii). The Tenets of Scouting which Roosevelt referred to as guides to the creation of citizen-leaders are as follows.

### ***Tenets of Scouting***

<i>Scout Motto</i>	Be Prepared
<i>Scout Slogan</i>	Do a good turn daily.

*Scout Oath*

On my honor, I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.

*Scout Law*

A Scout is:  
Trustworthy,  
Loyal,  
Helpful,  
Friendly,  
Courteous,  
Kind,  
Obedient,  
Cheerful,  
Thrifty,  
Brave,  
Clean,  
and Reverent.

*Outdoor Code*

As an American, I will do my best to -  
Be clean in my outdoor manners  
Be careful with fire  
Be considerate in the outdoors, and  
Be conservation minded.

*Aims of Scouting*      Character, Citizenship, Personal Fitness, and Leadership

*Methods of Scouting*

There are eight methods of scouting contributing to both good character and good citizenship. The methods by which the aims of scouting are achieved are listed here in alphabetical order as they are considered equally important.

*Advancement* – Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps in



overcoming them through the advancement method. The Scout plans their advancement and progresses at their own pace as they meet each challenge. The Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps them gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Scout grow in self-reliance and in the ability to help others.

*Association with Adults* – Scouts learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders can be positive role models for the members of their troops. In many cases, a Scoutmaster who is willing to listen to the Scouts, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound difference in their lives.

*Ideals* – The ideals of Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout Motto, and the Scout Slogan. The Scout measures themselves against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and, as they reach for them, they have some control over what and who they become.

*Leadership Development* – The Scouting program encourages Scouts to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership and becoming a servant leader helps a Scout accept the leadership role of others and guides them towards participating citizenship and character development.

*Outdoor Programs* – Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with one another. It is here that the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose. Being close to nature helps Scouts gain an appreciation for God's handiwork and humankind's place in it. It is a place to build self-confidence and self-awareness. The

outdoors is the laboratory for Scouts to learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

*Patrol Method* – The patrol method gives Scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. It places responsibility on young shoulders and teaches Scouts how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to interact in small groups where they can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine troop activities through their elected representatives.

*Personal Growth* – As Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Scouting. Young people grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. Probably no device is so successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn. Frequent personal conferences with their Scoutmaster help each Scout to determine their growth toward Scouting's aims.

*Uniform* – The uniform makes the Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Scouting is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals. The uniform is practical attire for Scout activities and provides a way for Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished (Boy Scouts of America, 2021).

Scouts BSA is a national organization. Across the United States, there are councils that manage the troops in their region of the country. This study was focused on

Wood Badge offered in the Northern Star Council which serves the area surrounding Minneapolis/Saint Paul Minnesota. Because the Northern Star Council is much larger than many of the neighboring councils, attendees at council events often include Scouts and Scouters from neighboring councils that are too small to hold regular events. Each council is composed of multiple districts that are spread out geographically around the council. These districts help make leadership more accessible to the smaller units or troops. Scouts belong to a troop. Troops are the main functional unit of scouting. Each troop, or unit, in the United States has a chartered organization. If people wish to start a Scouts BSA troop in their area, an organization needs to apply to Scouts BSA for a charter to operate a Scout troop. Organizations that seek charters are usually a place of worship, school, or another community group. In general, troops meet on a weekly basis often at their chartered organization's building. The chartered organization ensures that the troop has a Scoutmaster and serves as a supervisor for that person. The troop is led by an adult, or Scoutmaster, and the elected youth leader, Senior Patrol Leader.

Scouting is focused on servant leadership (Scouts BSA, 2019, p. 32). Servant leadership is when a leader uses guiding principles to shape a course for followers to become self-sufficient leaders in their own right (Northouse, 2019, p. 4). Youth are encouraged to develop self-leadership first through being prepared and working through their rank requirements and then to lead others. Scouts are provided with a clearly defined path to success through the rank requirements that are outlined for them by the program. They are assisted along this path by their patrol leaders and adult leaders.

### ***Patrol Method***

The patrol method is one of the eight methods of scouting. BSA founder Robert Baden-Powell not only created the patrol method but went on to state that "The Patrol Method is not *a* way to operate a BSA troop. It is the *only* way" (as cited in Montclair State University, 2019, p. 3). The patrol method is BSA's way of organizing the troop into small groups of six to eight scouts. Each patrol elects its own leader and operates as a sub-group of the troop at large. They plan and carry out activities as a patrol. This provides more scouts with opportunities to learn, gives them practice working with others and the give and take process involved in group dynamics. The patrol method is just one of the ways that prepares Scouts for future citizenship roles.

### ***Training***

Just as Scouts are trained and prepared for the future roles as leaders and citizens, their leaders are trained and prepared as well. This training continues to be expanded, most recently as a result of program changes and lawsuits.

Scouts BSA has been headline news in the last decade because of a number of lawsuits around both sexual abuse and the addition of females. According to the Associated Press, "Membership for the BSA's flagship Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA programs dropped from 1.97 million in 2019 to 1.12 million in 2020, a 43% plunge" (Crary, 2021). Scouts BSA is working to re-develop its image and actively prevent sexual abuse. Scouts BSA now has an extensive Youth Protection Training that every adult connected to Scouting participates in. In addition, the scouts themselves have training around safety practices. For example, every contact between a youth and an adult

includes a second adult. This means that every email or text has two adults on it in addition to the youth. Meetings, either in person, virtual, or over the phone have two adults. This is often referred to as two-deep leadership. In addition to working to prevent sexual abuse, Scouts BSA added females to the scouting program in February 2019. This again landed Scouts BSA in the news, as they are being sued by Girl Scouts for the use of the term “Scouts”. While both organizations have the same foundational roots, their paths have diverged. Boy Scouts of America has other groups in addition to the traditional Scouts BSA program, such as their Cub Scout program for the K-5 students, Explorers, Sea Scouts and Venturers. These other groups were open to females earlier than the traditional Scouts program, which was opened in 2019; some as early as 1970.

In addition to mandating Youth Protection Training (YPT), there is other required training for adult volunteers. If an adult wishes to work directly with scouts as either an assistant Scoutmaster or Scoutmaster, Scouts BSA requires Scouters to take Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS). This hands-on course teaches the basics of outdoor skills and ensures that leaders are experienced in the skills needed for a scout to reach First Class as well as teaching leaders the patrol method and instruction methods such as the EDGE method (Boy Scouts of America, 2018, p. 5). The EDGE Method is used by scouts to both teach and to learn a new skill. EDGE is an acronym for how to teach others a new skill:

**E**xplain how it is done

**D**emonstrate the steps

**G**uide learners as the practice

Enable them to succeed on their own (Scouts BSA, 2019 p. 38).

All Scouters take Youth Protection Training. All Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters, in addition to other Scouters who so choose, take IOLS. Scouters also have the opportunity to take a wide variety of subject-specific training offered either through Scouts BSA's online platform or through the University of Scouting. University of Scouting is a bi-annual training day hosted by a local council that offers Scouts and Scouters a wide variety of training. For example, one Scouter might take training on being a Merit Badge Counselor, while another takes Safety Afloat training prior to boating with Scouts. While Scouts BSA is a vast program, this study solely focuses on the development provided in the Wood Badge program.

### **Wood Badge**

Wood Badge is an advanced leadership course only available to Scouters. It is recommended that all Scouters that participate in Wood Badge are already fully trained for their position prior to going on course. The purpose of Wood Badge is to develop skilled leaders by getting Scouters to meet together and exchange experiences. Boy Scouts of America has written most of the training modules for this program and authors such as Wendell (2014) and Davis (1990) have interviewed participants and written journal articles and texts about the program.

### ***History of Wood Badge***

In 1919, the first Wood Badge course was held at Gilwell Park, England. Over the next fifteen years, a few Americans traveled to Gilwell every year to participate in Wood Badge in England. However, there was not widespread support for this training in

America. The prevailing thought was that Americans would not set aside their busy lives for eight days to participate in this training. However, things changed after August 1935 when Lord and Lady Baden-Powell visited the Schiff Scout Reservation in New Jersey at the end of a world tour of scouting. Following their visit, then President of Boy Scouts of America, Walter Head, invited Gilwell Camp Chief John Skinner Wilson to come to America. The next year in May and June, 1936, Wilson conducted the first Experimental Scout and Rover Wood Badge courses offered in America at Schiff Scout Reservation, New Jersey. The participants in this first Wood Badge course had felt that the experience had been enjoyable for the most part, but there were parts of the two-week course that were too British, strict and demanding (Davis, 1990, p. 19). However, due to World War II, as well as the knowledge that they could not implement Wood Badge as-is in the United States, it would be ten years before Boy Scouts of America would offer Wood Badge. When they did, it was restructured with a decreased emphasis on lecture and increased emphasis on doing and experiencing. Lectures were replaced with campfire talks. In 1948, the first official BSA Wood Badge courses were held, one at Schiff and one at Philmont Scout Ranch, in New Mexico. Eventually, a few councils were allowed to hold their own courses, including one in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1953 and one in Washington, DC in 1954. Over the next twenty years, two variations of the course existed: a national one for trainers and a sectional one for Scoutmasters, commissioners and other local Scouters. The courses focused exclusively on Scoutcraft skills, the patrol method and requirements a boy would need to earn First Class.

In 1964, staff from the national BSA office evaluated leadership skills offered in a

junior leader training course from the Monterey Bay Council, California called White Stag. White Stag had been a California-based project that was inspired by Scout leaders with Wood Badge and Army leadership training experiences. The national observers liked what they saw, and starting with Wood Badge Course #314 at Schiff Scout Reservation on June 17, 1967, the BSA conducted newly redesigned Wood Badge courses that added leadership skills to Wood Badge, building on what had been offered in White Stag. For the next five years, these revised courses were held and refined until they solidified into one new national program. By 1973, all Boy Scout Wood Badge courses nationwide moved to this new leadership development format and away from Scoutcraft. This revised format was used for the next 30 years until 2002. Originally, the courses were held during a week-long outing. However, as demands on people's times increased, BSA followed the lead of other courses in the world and began to offer the option of taking the course over two weekends starting in 1974. It was also around this time that BSA began to allow women to take various leadership positions. Starting in 1972, women were permitted to hold all positions except Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmaster. Because they were taking leadership positions, Wood Badge was opened up to women four years later, in 1976.

Over time, it once again became apparent that it was necessary to update and revise Wood Badge. The national office sought to combine the various Wood Badge programs being offered to the different sections of scouts into one course for all programs. Discussions began toward this goal in 1997 and in 2000 two pilot Wood Badge for the 21st Century courses were held, one at Florida Sea Base and one at Philmont



Scout Ranch (both National High Adventure locations). The pilot was successful, and since 2002, Scouts BSA has required that all councils teach the course. A general description of the current curriculum Wood Badge Course follows.

The Wood Badge Course begins with one six-day week or two three-day weekends of camping packed with classes, games, activities and conversations focused on leadership. Each time a participant attends the Wood Badge it is termed going *on course*. The first time on course, you are a participant in a patrol; the second time on course, you would guide a patrol and take additional leadership responsibilities. The third and subsequent times on course, a participant normally takes on more and more leadership responsibilities until they are running the course themselves.

As with the rest of Scouting, the base grouping of participants is a patrol. For Wood Badge, they begin with a patrol of complete strangers. Throughout the six days of Wood Badge, each person takes a turn as patrol leader. While Wood Badge makes strong use of the patrol, the BEST study research noted that other Scouter training available through Scouts BSA does not optimize the use of the patrol method. The BEST Study research calls for use of the patrol method in adult training and future research around this idea. Montclair State University (2019) stated:

Of note, researchers found that though it is addressed in alignment with the core components, there were zero instances of the Patrol Method being reinforced through the delivery methods in the Scoutmaster syllabus. These factors may impact both Scoutmaster and Scout experiences in their troops. Future research should focus on this question. (p. 7)

Each patrol is assigned tasks throughout the week that they are asked to complete. These tasks are intentionally assigned with too much to do and/or not enough time, materials or instructions. According to former participant Dan Zaccara, “The way the course is front loaded for the participants means everything is in their laps in the first two or three days. That puts stress in the system, stress in the system puts them through all the stages of team development” (as cited in Wendell, 2014, p. 32). Tuckman’s (1965) model of group formation still accurately captures the stages - Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing - that each patrol goes through as they work through the Wood Badge challenges. These stages are essential as the patrol develops their capacity for Team Learning.

Participants are provided a handbook at the beginning of the course to highlight key takeaways and provide space for taking notes. Foundational information is provided in the front of the book to ensure participants have ready access to them. In addition to key definitions and the Tenets of Scouting, the introductory material also outlines what will be taught in the course. The five themes of Wood Badge framing the course include: Living the Values, Growing, Connecting, Guiding, and Empowering. The following 14 leadership competencies are woven into those themes:

1. Drive Vision, Mission, & Values
2. Know Thyself
3. Communicate Effectively
4. Include & Optimize Diverse Talent
5. Learn to Listen, & Listen to Learn
6. Plan with a Bias for Action
7. Develop Individuals & Teams
8. Know Thy Territory
9. Apply Interpersonal Savvy
10. Manage Conversations
11. Coach & Mentor

12. Embrace and Lead Change
13. Create a Culture
14. Inspire the Heart (Northern Star Scouting, 2021, p. 13)

Each participant leaves the six days of workshop with tickets to work on. Tickets are comprised of five different goals that the participants set for themselves. Each of these are projects that are completed with the aim of benefiting the Scouter's home unit and local community. Tickets are an opportunity for participants to start to apply their learning in the scouting community immediately after training and start to practice what they have learned.

Montclair State University in their BEST Study asked, "Evidence shows that BSA has helped develop young scouts into strong leaders. But does it do the same for adult volunteers?" (2019, p. 1) Full BEST Study results were not available at the time this research was conducted, so future research may be needed to connect the BEST study results and the results found in this research into Wood Badge and this learning organization.

### ***Learning Organization***

According to Garvin (1993), "a learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights" (p. 1). There are as many definitions of a learning organization as there are authors who have written about them. Learning organizations are a concept of continuous improvement. The iterative process of learning and growth is demonstrated as organizations acknowledge that changing processes and procedures over time allows for the accommodation and integration of new technology, needs, skills, and

changing human participants. According to Senge (1996), "We must learn how to see the company as a living system and to see it as a system within the context of the larger systems of which it is a part" (p. 53).

### **BSA as a Learning Organization**

From its very conception, Boy Scouts of America has demonstrated that it is a learning organization. As the combination of three strong programs, Sons of Daniel Boone, Woodcraft Indians and Scouting, it brought together elements of these great organizations under one umbrella. The ground-up change is also exemplified by the continued national adoption of things that a council is doing well. California's White Stag program is one such example, but if you look across the Scouts BSA program there are others. By design, this is what the Wood Badge Ticket is designed to do. Scouters are asked to look for a gap in the program that they can improve upon and then find a way to bridge that gap.

The Wood Badge themes align themselves with Senge's Five Disciplines of a Learning Organization. As the next section outlines each of the disciplines, I will tie in the Wood Badge themes that are aligned with that discipline.

### **Senge's Five Disciplines of a Learning Organization**

The framework for this study is based on Senge's Five Disciplines of a Learning Organization. Scouts BSA is an example of a learning organization because successful learning organizations are comprised of people that set aside their personal aspirations and work together toward a common goal. Senge (2006) looks at the organization as a whole, asking members to shift their mindset from seeing their own piece to becoming

active participants in shaping how the organization is, to learning about themselves as a whole (p. 69). The following five disciplines are outlined below: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Building a Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking. Each section also contains information about how it is applied to Wood Badge themes in this study.

### ***Discipline 1: Personal Mastery***

Personal Mastery is the growth and development of the individual that belongs to the learning organization. There are multiple facets that comprise this discipline: self-development, life-long commitment to learning, personal vision, and the organizational commitment to the development of Personal Mastery in their own people. Mastery means more than just being able to produce results; it is the ability to understand the discipline's definitively the way those results were produced (Senge, 1994, p. 194).

In his book, *Leadership* (2019), Northouse stated that authentic leaders have strong values and a strong sense of purpose (p. 199). This speaks to the personal vision that a person would have in their quest for Personal Mastery. Senge (2006) described people with high levels of Personal Mastery as someone whose vision has moved beyond a good idea and has become a calling (p. 132). Yet, even these people with high levels of Personal Mastery are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and that Personal Mastery is a continual process of improvement and is never done.

This organizational commitment to the development of Personal Mastery in their own members is why Scouts BSA offers Wood Badge. As a learning organization, Scouts BSA is committed to augmenting the leadership skills of their adult volunteers. Because

Wood Badge is an optional training, are participants voluntarily pursuing self-development? Wood Badge is something that many Scouters participate in multiple times. This repeated participation is one way to show continued commitment to personal development. This aligns with the adage *see one - do one - teach one* which underlines the method of teaching where students observe and are taught about leadership (*see one*) by attending Wood Badge; practice the skills on their own (*do one*) by completing their tickets; and then return to Wood Badge as a staff member (*teach one*) which completes the process.

### ***Discipline 2: Mental Models***

According to Senge (2006), Mental Models are the deeply ingrained internal understandings people have in their heads about how things work (p. 164). Every individual unpacks what is happening in the world around them differently based on how they have built an understanding of how the world works and how people should behave. These assumptions and generalizations are developed through individual cultural experiences, education, and a multitude of other factors. These models are continually shaping and reshaping themselves over time.

Taking the time to reflect on experiences allows people to better understand how our Mental Models are formed (Senge, 2006, p. 175). Both individual reflection and group reflections are important. A post-mortem on a project can bring valuable insights to an organization. This post-mortem is made even more effective if individuals have taken the time to do individual reflection prior to coming to the group reflection. In their book *The Leadership Challenge* (2007), Kouzes and Posner discussed holding a postmortem

focus around the following “four questions:

- What did we do well?
- What did we do poorly?
- What did we learn from this project?
- How can we do better next time?” (p. 213)

The original, British version of Wood Badge had a strict emphasis on notebook-keeping by participants (Davis, 1990, p. 19). How are current participants maintaining this practice and was it effective? Conversations around campfires are a common scene at the end of a day out of doors. This practice allows for multiple people to unpack a shared experience and look at the different ways people have interpreted the events. This discussion around a campfire not only allows participants to perform a post-mortem, but it also allows them to transition those learnings into goals for the future which are part of the next discipline, Building a Shared Vision.

### ***Discipline 3: Building a Shared Vision***

Senge stated that “Visions...create the spark” (2006, p. 194). Shared visions are about the creation of a common sense of purpose among all or a subset of the people within a learning organization. While the vision statement is a formal declaration created by a few people at one point in time on behalf of the company, the shared vision is the picture of the future of the learning organization that is driving the work. When a person’s personal vision is aligned with that shared vision, there is synergy between them that they can build upon (Senge, 1994, p. 324).

Most organizations and corporations have mission statements and vision

statements. Scouts BSA has an official vision statement: “The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.” Their mission statement is closely aligned to that: “The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.” (Northern Star Scouting, 2021, p. 7) The Tenets of Scouting — Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout Motto, Scout Slogan, Outdoor Code — provide the framework around which a shared vision can be built. The look and feel of the organization changes from council to council, district to district and troop to troop. These changes are due to the shared vision of the leadership that is in charge at that time. This is also the same across Wood Badge patrols. Each individual patrol creates a shared vision with their group as they work together to build their own meaning.

#### ***Discipline 4: Team Learning***

According to Senge, there are three fundamental elements to Team Learning: thinking insightfully, taking innovative action, and an interrelationship with other teams (2006, p. 219). Teams must foster collaboration, “Collaboration is the master skill that enables teams...to function effectively” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 242). Teams develop new forms of shared knowledge when they learn and grow together. Teams transition from having discussions, where participants have a goal to win, to having dialogue, where participants build on each other’s input to collaboratively create new outcomes where everybody wins (Senge, 2006, p. 223). Teams take time to develop.

This is why Wood Badge insists on patrols and patrol challenges. Throughout the



Wood Badge training, each participant is part of a patrol and stays with that patrol throughout the course. This allows the participants to cycle through the process of Team Learning over the course of many days rather than having to form new teams multiple times throughout the program. This allows for deeper dives into practicing Team Learning and understanding the facets of it.

Research is recommending additional research regarding how prior careers are impacting a participant's perception and implementation of their training (Stevens, 2019, p. 161). To this end, respondents are being asked to indicate their prior knowledge about both scouting and level of formal education.

#### ***Discipline 5: Systems Thinking***

Systems thinking comprises the disciplines and processes across an organization that manifest themselves into the organization's system (Senge, 1994, p. 89). Unlike the other four disciplines, this is not a stand alone discipline, but rather the fusion of the other four disciplines. This discipline takes a deeper look at the interrelationships that are impacting the organization as a whole, rather than exploring the individual parts. It looks at the *dynamic complexity* that is the result of the push and pull of the myriad of elements that are interconnected throughout the organization. A single change in one part of the organization affects the rest of the organization in predictable and unpredictable ways. Systems thinking involves people from across the organization working together to look at the inter-dependencies.

One of the critical elements in understanding other pieces of an organization is defining the universal language that is used throughout the organization. Most companies

have a list of terms and acronyms that one learns through the on-boarding process. In Scouts BSA, as with many other organizations, a common or universal language is used within the organization that new members must learn when joining the organization. Just as the key terms that were introduced in Chapter 1 were critical to the reader's ability to understand this paper, those same terms create a universal language for Scouters participating in Scouts BSA. This is one part of building Systems Thinking.

The formal organizational structure of Scouts BSA is the same in all units across the country. Scouts are at the base; a group of scouts forms a patrol; a group of patrols form a Unit; a Unit has Scouters that supervise and coordinate with both the charter organization and the district. Districts are composed of multiple units and are managed by council. Councils are somewhat autonomous, but that autonomy is within the boundaries of guidelines set forth by the national office of Scouts BSA. However, this formal structure is not how Scouts BSA as a learning organization creates Systems Thinking. Opportunities such as council-level Wood Badge training of Unit leaders are forums where national training is conducted for Unit Scouters, essentially creating an opportunity to bypass organizational structure and allow for open discussion across all levels of the organization.

### **Summary**

This chapter built a foundation in Scouts BSA as a whole, as well as an in-depth look into the Wood Badge program. In addition, it unpacked Senge's five disciplines of a Learning Organization. The purpose of this study is to explore the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization observed in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts

BSA's Wood Badge in 2021. How the combination of my participation in Wood Badge, participant surveys and selected participant interviews will be used to answer the primary and secondary research questions is described in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

"Research is creating new knowledge."

Neil Armstrong, Eagle Scout (1930-2012)  
(Levine, 2005)

#### Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the methodology used to collect and analyze data for this study. The researcher used a case study approach to answer the primary research question: *In what ways are the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization present in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge?* The secondary research question was: *How does the prevalence or absence of each of Senge's five disciplines affect Scouters' perceptions of Wood Badge training?* This chapter explains the rationale for using case study research, details the selection of research participants and setting, and explains methods of data collection and data analysis. Using the researcher's personal experience, in addition to surveys and interviews of participants, this study examined the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization observed in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge in 2021. The purpose of the survey and interviews was to ask open-ended questions with follow up questions in a structured inquiry. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), "The qualitative interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world" (p. 1).

The interview questions were written to seek out a variety of approaches in an

attempt to elicit responses to the main questions. By asking broad questions, reflective questions, and follow-up questions, the study could hone in on the practices of the interviewee. The survey questions were written to obtain a broad spectrum of insight about a wider selection of participants. The in-person experience allowed the researcher to gain a deeper perspective of the Wood Badge program itself.

### **Research Paradigm and Rationale**

As an active participant in Scouts BSA leadership and an eager consumer of leadership coursework, I was interested in the overlap of the two. Eagle Scouts are widely valued as employees and future leaders (Smotherton-Short, 2021, p. 1). The adult leaders in scouting that guided them and served as mentors on that journey are less recognized. How do these adult mentors of Eagle Scouts learn to successfully lead? Wood Badge is a key part of that. This qualitative case study included both surveys and interviews to gather information to help inform how Scouts BSA, as a learning organization, leverages Wood Badge training to develop Scouters into stronger leaders. Qualitative research design is an iterative process that weaves together the different design components with flexibility rather than fixed, logical sequence (Maxwell, 2013, p. 3). The application of Senge's disciplines to Wood Badge, or for that matter to any of the training modules in Scouts BSA, has not been found by the researcher to exist, therefore there is no anticipated outcome. The lack of hypothesis, therefore, also aligns with the use of qualitative case study.

### **Case Study Method**

The design used in this study was what McMillan and Schumacher (2010)

described as a case study where a single entity is examined by gathering multiple sources of data at a specific time (p. 32). In this case, the entity studied is Wood Badge training. The multiple sources of data collected are the results of the survey and the results of the interviews. The time frame for this study coincided with the spring 2021 Wood Badge training course held by Northern Star Council. According to Yin (2014), a case study is used when the researcher is asking how and why questions in a current event where the research has no control (p. 39). This definition of case study design matches the needs of this research.

### **Research Setting**

There was no flexibility in the selection of the research location, as the researcher was specifically looking at Wood Badge training which is only offered in select locations at specific times of the year. As the researcher is a member of the council in the study, attendance is limited to trainings in that council. Trainings are currently offered twice a year by the local council, and the researcher selected the next available training session. In-person training sessions are held at existing scout camps within the council. The camp location was approximately an hour away from downtown Minneapolis/St Paul. It is a 167-acre facility covered with stands of pine and oak grove located on the banks of a river. Participants were camping in individual tents with access to restroom, shower, and kitchen facilities as well as picnic shelters. One Wood Badge meeting was held outside of the two in-person weekends via video conference prior to the in-person weekends to prepare participants for the experience.

## **Participants**

Wood Badge participants and trainers are Scouts BSA volunteers. Wood Badge is optional for both the participants and the staff. The prestige of Wood Badge participation amongst the people affiliated Scouts BSA leads the course to be well-attended, if not sold-out. All participants and staff were sent the survey via email after the conclusion of the second week of in-person training. Interviews were conducted with a few selected participants representing a variety of years with Wood Badge participation. Interviewees were selected based on their willingness to participate as well as their ability to add diversity to selection of interviewees. The interviewees were all participants in the course that completed the course, completed the survey, and indicated willingness to participate in the interview. The group was composed of a mix of males and females and a variety of ages and backgrounds. Interviewees were selected from different patrols so that a variety of experiences were represented. The participants ranged from new Scouters with limited experience in scouting to lifelong Scouters that had participated in Scouts BSA as a youth.

## **Data Collection Methods and Tools**

Case study research allows researchers to collect and analyze quantitative survey data in order to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being examined (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). All participants and staff were sent the survey via email after the conclusion of the second week of in-person training.

## **Ethnography**

The researcher was a participant in the study. The research established a specific

time each day to record personal notes and observations about the day including notes about each of the five disciplines. The researcher kept a notebook nearby in order to capture quotes and observations that arose and appeared pertinent to the research. Ellis noted that relational ethics not only recognizes but also values, the mutual connectedness between the researcher and the researched (Adams et al., 2015, p. 60). With this understanding, it must be noted that the researcher as a participant in the study is interconnected with the participants and influenced by the training.

### **Survey**

The survey (see [Appendix B](#)) was created via Google Forms. The survey was distributed via the Wood Badge scribe's master distribution list. The participants were also informed by the researcher making a verbal announcement about the survey that would be sent during the closing ceremony of the event. An additional appeal to complete the survey was made by the researcher to the private Facebook group created just for this Wood Badge course. The survey began with a brief introduction as to the purpose of the survey and the planned use of the results. According to Fink (2017), there should be a logical order in which the questions appear (p. 70). The first portion of the survey was to assess the general participant level of prior knowledge in both scouting and in leadership training. Piping, also known as branching, was used to prevent participants from being exposed to non-applicable questions. The survey was piloted by a prior Wood Badge participant in preparation for the pilot interview. The goal was to collect a minimum of one survey from each of the seven Wood Badge patrols. Overall, there were 28 questions in the survey. The estimated average completion time for participants was 10 minutes.



The survey was used to obtain a larger snapshot of the overall Wood Badge participants. This allowed for data on generalizations and provided insight prior to the follow-up interview which were conducted with a few selected participants.

### **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with four selected participants representing a variety of years with Wood Badge participation. Interviewees were selected based on their willingness to participate as indicated by the survey as well as their ability to add diversity to the selection of interviewees. Diversity for selection was determined by having representatives from different patrols as well as a mix of first time and repeat attendees. If possible, diversity of location (where participant was from) was also taken into account. If not enough participants volunteered through the survey form, the researcher emailed individual participants to request an interview. Individual interviews were held via video conference and were recorded with permission from the participants. In order to ensure that questions were clear and would elicit responses relevant to the research questions, a pilot interview was conducted with a prior Wood Badge participant from another council in another state. The interviews started with basic questions to build rapport. The interview contained 20-25 questions as some questions were only asked as follow-ups to others and the average length of the interviews was 40 minutes (see [Appendix A](#)). Interviews included follow up on questions as informed by the survey. In addition, follow-up questions were asked as needed to clarify responses made during the interview.

In addition to surveys and interviews, the researcher was a participant in the

Wood Badge training. Therefore, first person observations and insights were also integrated into the data collection.

### **Timeline**

In-person Wood Badge training sessions were held April 30 to May 2, 2021 and May 22 to 23, 2021. Surveys were emailed to all participants on May 24, 2021 so that the in-person weekends were complete, but the training sessions were fresh in the minds of participants. Responses were requested by May 28th, so that survey participants responded in a timely manner and before Memorial Day weekend. Survey results were analyzed in June to allow for the identification of any clarifications needing follow-up during the interviews. Interviews were conducted throughout the month of July as participants were available.

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the survey and interviews, I first reviewed the surveys. I looked for trends and significant findings. Second, I reviewed the interviews. Audio recordings of each interview were made to ensure that interviews were captured accurately. The Otter (2021) application was used to create a baseline transcription which was then enhanced through multiple reviews of the recordings. I began to look for how their responses wove into Senge's five disciplines to guide my thinking about how these would create the data to address the main research question.

In Figure 2, the Wordle represents the many words that were prevalent throughout the interviews. I created the Wordle from the interview text intending to highlight potential themes and be able to be used as a way to analyze the interviews. However, the

results did not produce themes to help with coding the interview data in alignment to the five disciplines. Some of the largest words woven throughout the wordle are *know* and *think* which exemplify the commitment of the participants to grow and learn. Another word that was high on the list was *patrol* signifying the relationship between participants and the patrol method.

## Figure 2

Wordle resulting from the text of all of the Wood Badge interviews.



WordItOut (2021)

## Research Approvals

The Hamline Institutional Research Board (IRB) permission to conduct research was granted on April 9, 2021. Permission to conduct research was obtained from the local Scouts BSA council conducting the training on December 9, 2020. Approval was

obtained for participant consent forms (see [Appendix C](#)). These participant consent forms were provided to and signed by all survey and interview participants.

### **Summary**

This study provided insight into the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization observed in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge. The research tools included surveys and interviews. Chapter four presents the results of the data analysis, themes that resulted from the analysis, and evidence to support those conclusions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

“I think taking Wood Badge and seeing that there are other people like me, really helped to break out of my shell, as a person and be more effective and more engaging.”  
Jay, 2021 — Scouts BSA Wood Badge Participant

#### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter details the results of the survey and interviews that were conducted in pursuit of the answer to the research questions. First, the data collected in the survey is described and then analyzed according to each of the five disciplines of a learning organization. Secondly, the interviews are presented and tied into each of the five disciplines of a learning organization. Each question or set of questions in the interviews was tied to a specific discipline.

#### *Purpose statement*

The purpose of this study was to explore the five disciplines of Senge’s learning organization observed in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA’s Wood Badge in 2021.

#### *Research questions*

The primary research question of this study is: *In what ways are the five disciplines of Senge’s learning organization present in the training of adult volunteer leaders (Scouters) in Scouts BSA’s Wood Badge?* The secondary research question of this study is: *How does the prevalence or absence of each of Senge’s five disciplines affect Scouters’ perceptions of Wood Badge training?*

## **Data Collection**

### *Demographic Data*

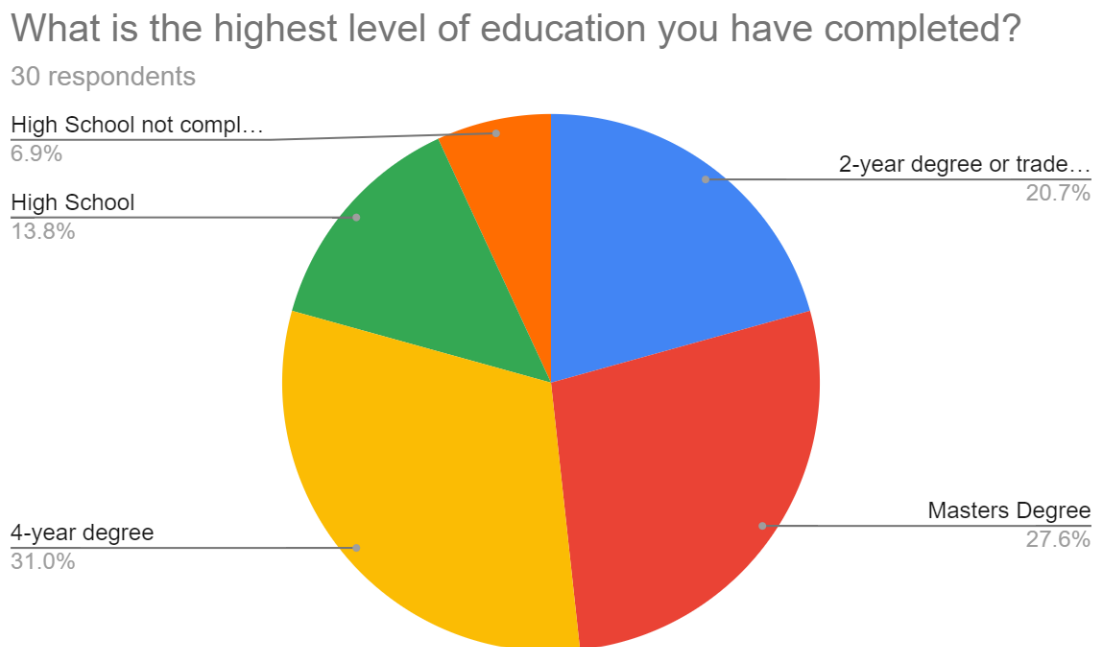
Once the demographic information was collected, the remainder of the survey was aimed at collecting information around Senge's five disciplines. While all participants on the course were not white, all survey respondents were white.

### **Survey and Interview Results**

Interview participants were selected from the 30 completed surveys as follows: Only surveys from those respondents indicating that they were volunteering to participate in a follow-up interview were reviewed as potential interview candidates. Participants who were on course for the first time were filtered (all staff was removed). Those two criteria reduced the list to five potential interviewees. One candidate, who was in the same patrol as the researcher and another respondent, was held in reserve and the other four candidates were contacted and subsequently interviewed. Three of the seven patrols were represented in the interviews. There were two males, Jay and Duke, and two females, Robyn and Julia, interviewed. Jay is a male in his 40s with a two-year degree or trade school certificate. Duke is a male in his 50s with a master's degree. Robyn is a female in her 50s with a master's degree. Julia is a female in her 40s with a master's degree.

**Figure 3**

*Highest level of education completed by survey participants.*



The education level of the survey respondents (see Figure 3) shows that about 27% of respondents have a Master's Degree or higher. The education level of the interviewees was higher than the average of the survey respondents. At the time the adult participants were of boy scout age only the males were eligible to participate, which both of them had done as youths. One of the females had been a girl scout as a youth, the other had not. Overall, survey results of all participants showed that two thirds of survey respondents were in scouting, either Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts as a youth. In this way, the survey respondents and interview participants had similar percentages for scouting participation as youth.

### **Analysis of the survey and interview data**

The first interview question was an icebreaker question to get the interviewee talking and to begin building a rapport. The following simple get-to-know-you question was asked: *Why are you involved in Scouting?* All interviewees had become involved as adults when their children began to participate in Cub Scouts. All interviewees began by mentioning Cub Scouts, which is the youngest group of youth involved in Scouts BSA and begins in Kindergarten.

#### ***Personal Mastery***

The interview then began to transition into questions that drive toward each of Senge's disciplines. The first discipline explored in the survey and interview process was Personal Mastery. Personal Mastery is the growth and development of the individual that belongs to the learning organization (Senge, 2006, p. 129). There are multiple facets that comprise this discipline: self-development, life-long commitment to learning, personal vision, and the organizational commitment to the development of Personal Mastery in their own people.

To explore the discipline of Personal Mastery, survey respondents were asked what led them to participate in Wood Badge. It is important to remember that survey respondents included first time participants as well as staffers. The open-ended question in the survey resulted in three types of response: improving leadership skills, being asked to participate, and improving youth experiences. The majority of those being asked to participate were staff members; however, staff members and participants fell into all three categories. If running the survey again, rather than leave this as an open-ended question, I

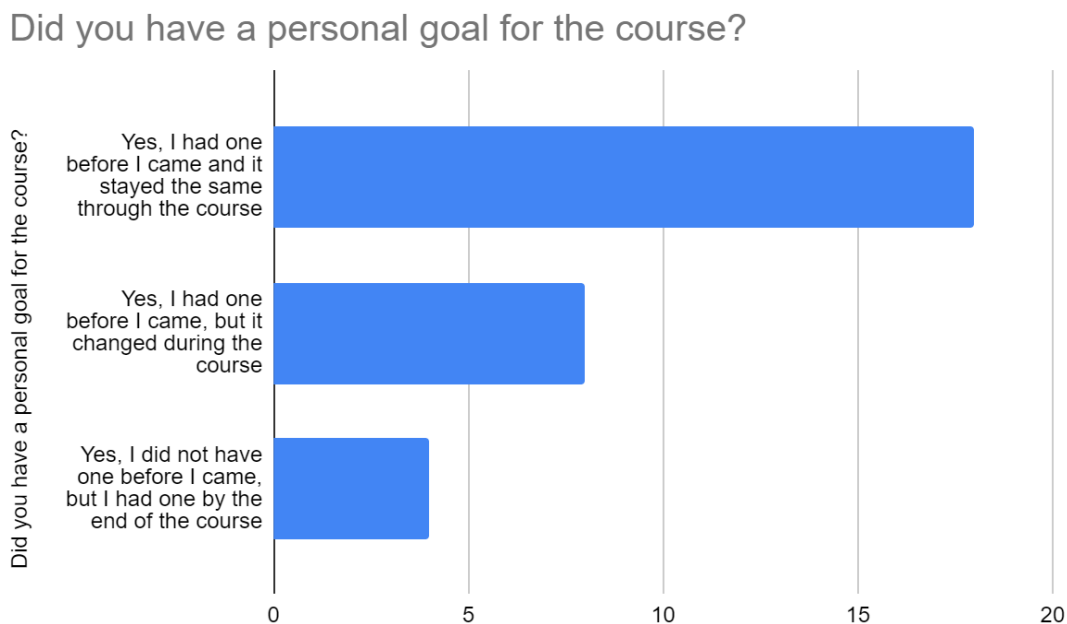


would design the question to ask participants which of these categories applied, or other, and allow respondents to select more than one. As a researcher participating in Wood Badge, I had chosen to participate in Wood Badge to improve youth experiences and improve leadership skills.

In order to better understand the interviewee's self-development goal, they were asked: *What led you to participate in Wood Badge?* For most of the interviewees, they felt it was their next step as a leader. One of the statements from Jay captures the sentiment clearly, "I'm always trying to take the training to become an effective leader ... we need to find the rough edges first and smooth them out." It was clear that Jay typically seeks out this type of learning experience, which aligns with my goals for participating in Wood Badge. When asked, the other interviewees stated that they did not normally seek this type of learning experience out. The one exception was Duke, who stated that he would typically seek out this type of experience for work but not outside of work. This shows that Personal Mastery was not consistently, consciously sought out by all respondents. However, because Wood Badge is a course that people voluntarily sign up for, in some ways all participants sought out this experience. Survey respondents were asked if they had a personal goal for the course (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

*Summary of 30 survey participants' description of personal goals for the course. No respondents selected the option: No, I never had a personal goal before, during or after the course.*



Digging deeper into Personal Mastery, interviewees were asked: *What was your personal goal for participating in Wood Badge?* The majority of interviewees did not have a conscious personal goal before participating in Wood Badge. One interviewee stated that their goal was to learn more about scouts, which is a general concept that all of them related to at some point in their discussion. Duke, however, may have captured the sentiment clearly in his statement, “the personal goal is always to just be better coming out of it than when you went in.” As a researcher participant, while I would not have

been able to consciously state a personal goal I had entering Wood Badge, my belief is that I did align with Duke's sentiment of improvement.

### ***Mental Models***

Senge's second discipline is Mental Models which are the internal understandings people have about how things work. Mental models are effectively built through both individual reflection and group reflections. To start exploring Mental Models of participants, interviewees were asked: *What are some assumptions or stereotypes about Scouts BSA you feel you may have entered Scouts BSA with?* The male and female perspectives varied greatly at this point. Women in Scouts BSA is a more recent development and the transition from Boy Scouts of America to Scouts BSA is still a work in progress. This was evident in both Robyn's and Julia's responses to this question.

All interviewees described what they felt were stereotypes of Scouts BSA. Of note is that these perceived stereotypes changed over time. Julia's interview encapsulated one such change. Julia's initial stereotype, "my experience as a young girl ... that boy scouts were pretty much typical teenage boys...conceited and they always felt like they were better than us" evolved to "if a person is an Eagle Scout... tells you a lot about their character, their strong character." Eagle Scouts are generally known for having strong character. For example, "Every branch of the U.S. military allows Eagle Scouts to enter at a higher rank and pay grade than others who are not Eagle Scouts."(Smotherton-Short, 2021, p. 1).

Robyn captured another issue that may not necessarily be a stereotype as much as an observation:

It still tends to be a very patriarchal organization, and I realized that it's a big organization and it's definitely trying to shift, especially since allowing girls in troops and, you know, women have been leaders and scouting for years. But even down to the ability for girls to find clothing. I think it's really restricted and so, wow, you know words say that it's inclusive sometimes, but the materials and options available for girls aren't necessarily there.

As a parent of one of the Inaugural Female Eagle Scouts, and as the researcher, I have also witnessed firsthand the growing pains that the organization is going through as it transitions from all male troops to serving both male and female youth. Changes in large organizations do not occur overnight and as typical of any large organizational change, there is not buy-in from all members of the organization, which also creates a slower adoption of change throughout the organization.

Robyn noted that, “we're really *boy* and *girl*. I don't think that we have addressed any sort of gender fluidity at all in scouting.” As a participant, I would agree that while some changes are being made that will better accommodate gender fluid youth, they are being done for the purpose of accommodating males and females rather than addressing gender fluidity. For example, because camps have constantly changing numbers of male and female attendees, bathrooms are slowly being changed over from open shower-rooms designed for males to single-stall bathrooms that will accommodate any age and any gender. When girls were added to scouting, they were added as separate female troops, not added to the boys troops to create co-ed troops. This leaves non-binary youth forced to join a boys or girls troop.

Robyn continued, stating “we use a lot of appropriation of Native American symbol folklore.” As a participant of scouting myself, as well as a researcher, I am perhaps more familiar with this issue than Robyn was at the time of the interview. There are numerous articles addressing cultural appropriation. The alignment of Native American culture with what is used in Scouts BSA varies widely across the nation, with some tribes working closely with local scouting organizations to support and educate and other tribes are not. Some of these traditions stem back to the founding of Scouts BSA and the influence of Seton’s *Woodcraft Indians*. This is an area that requires further research, as my research did not explore all of the literature available on cultural appropriation well enough to address this. However, it is an important topic to note as it does play into Wood Badge participants’ views of the organization.

Robyn continued: “...the lawsuit, and the public perception of Scouting has definitely been tarnished.” I agree with Robyn’s perception and that is evidenced by the documentation provided in Chapter One. As noted in Chapter One, Scouts BSA has been headline news because of a number of lawsuits around sexual abuse. These Mental Models that Robyn presented are not isolated viewpoints and are clearly stereotypes that Scouts BSA is wrestling with. These stereotypes were part of discussions throughout this Wood Badge course. However, also evident was the positive attitude that this can be turned around. Robyn stated, “I certainly believe in the core values and in what it does. That’s why I’m involved but I think that we could do better...” I believe the idea that *we can do better* plays a significant role in why adults participate in Wood Badge.

The mental model discussion then continued as interviewees were asked: *What are some assumptions or stereotypes about Scouts BSA you feel you may have entered Wood Badge with?* This question was one that interviewees struggled with and most did not have much to say beyond the high expectations that were set by prior Wood Badge participants who had completed the program. As Duke stated, “Everybody talks about it being such a great program. I was probably expecting the best in the world.” and Jay echoed that sentiment, “You're gonna become... an instant better leader.” These statements align with everything the researcher heard leading up to this project, during the project and continue to hear as I work in the Scouting community.

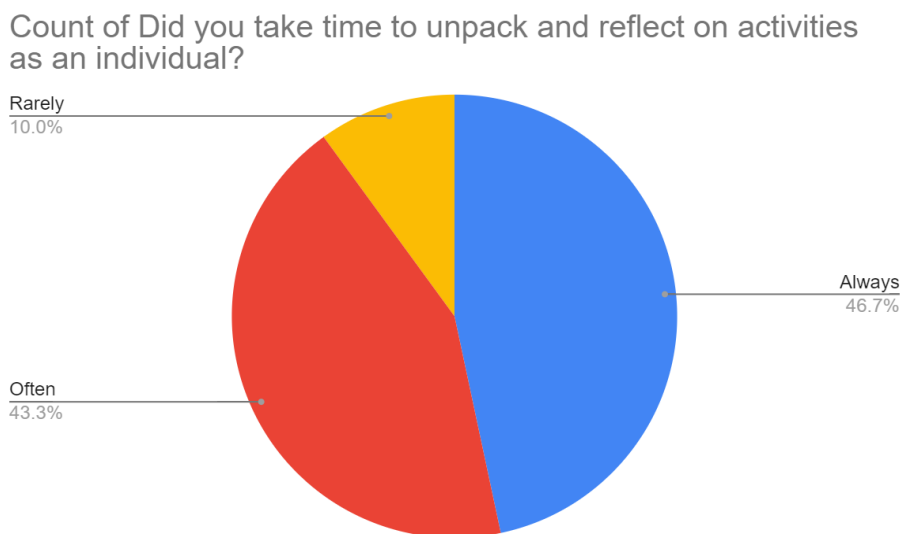
Common Mental Models were found with all interviewees surrounding the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, and the other Tenets of Scouting. The Scout Oath and Scout Law are repeated at the beginning of every troop meeting. This repetition along with the application of those tenets throughout the Scout advancement program keeps them at the forefront of their minds. Those underlying principles lay the foundation for the Mental Models that Wood Badge participants enter Wood Badge with and strengthen during their time on course.

A key piece of Mental Models is reflecting on learnings. Survey respondents were asked about both their individual and group reflections on learnings as shown in Figures 5 and 6. The results showed that slightly more participants unpacked learnings with their peers than individually; 93% compared to 90%. Overall, 90-93% of participants were actively unpacking their learnings either individually, with peers, or both. When looking

across both questions by respondent, only one participant felt that they rarely unpacked activities and that their patrol never did. This respondent appears to be an outlier.

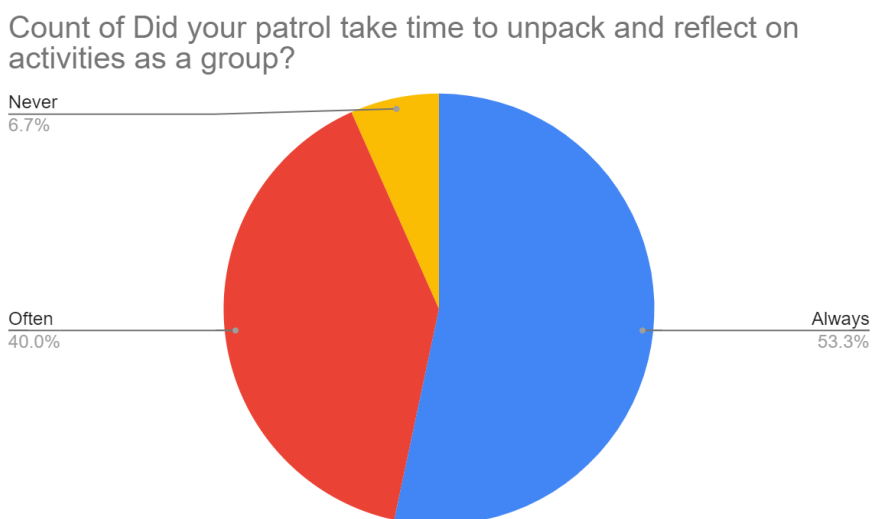
### Figure 5

*Summary of 30 survey participant's frequency of individual reflection on activities.*



## Figure 6

*Summary of 30 survey participant's frequency of patrol reflection on activities.*



Interviewees were asked: *How did you take the time to reflect on your learnings? For example, did you meditate on your day, write in a journal, campfire or hold independent discussions with other patrol members? Did your patrol hold any post-mortems after any of the activities? Any other ways you reflected?* The responses unanimously focused on the value of reflecting and discussing with their patrol members. None of the participants journaled. Perhaps, this was as Julia stated, “there was no downtime for me to process anything.” As a researcher, I had taken a journal with me with the full intent of taking notes every evening before going to sleep, however, as Julia noted, there was no downtime and I did not write. The course did provide space for notetaking and journaling in the participant handbook and historically journaling was part of the course agenda. These interviewees, like the survey respondents, valued the time



they spent reflecting and discussing with their patrols. For example, Robyn shared that “my method for reflection was discussion with other Patrol members and particularly that second weekend, when we had just more downtime with our patrol.” Duke expanded on that and mentioned he had the opportunity to reflect with other past Wood Badge participants as well, which built even more on his experience:

It was a different perspective. His experiences were different than what ours were at a different time frame. It was kind of neat, on how we did connect, we had an agreement on a lot of the aspects that we were talking about.

It was evident through both the interviews and surveys that the opportunity to discuss and reflect not only with the patrol but with other Scouters enhanced the experience and learnings for the participants. This *reflections on learnings* piece of Senge’s mental model was clearly represented and is a key part of how Wood Badge demonstrates it is aligned with a learning organization (Senge, 2006).

### ***Building a Shared Vision***

Senge’s third discipline is Building a Shared Vision (2006). Shared visions are about the creation of a common sense of purpose among all or a subset of the people within a learning organization. Survey respondents were asked about shared goals. While 43% stated that they had never created a shared goal with their patrol, the rest did state that one was created. However, of the patrols that created a shared goal, 41% indicated that the goal shifted during the course. When this topic was broached with interviewees, the responses did not fully align with the survey responses, as there was no indicator of goal shifting in the interviewee responses.

The following interview question was asked, *Did your patrol develop a common shared goal for the weekend?*, with the follow-up question of, *Was this goal implied or explicitly stated?* While the interviewees stated that they did not work with their patrol to explicitly develop a common goal, they felt a common goal was understood. This led to none of the interviewees explicitly answering the question: *What role did you play in the creation of your patrol's shared vision?* The implied common goal was, as Duke put it clearly, “better ourselves to make us more effective in our roles and scouting.” Robyn shared that, “our common goal was to take out of Wood Badge what each of us needed and to support each other in doing that.” Therefore, while patrols did not sit down and create a common shared vision, there was an understanding that the goals of Wood Badge created a shared vision for the participants. As a researcher, this aligns with my observations.

That said, Jay was quick to point out that because of the varied experience levels of the participants the common goal was playing out on a spectrum. Jay clarified, “because we had so many diverse people; we had a mom that was new to scouting.” This delineation across the shared vision plays into the next question that was asked of the interviewees, *What was the goal and did it align with your personal vision? If not, why do you think that did not happen?* Again, because respondents struggled to expand on this, as they felt that the implied shared vision was inclusive of their personal vision. As a researcher, I wonder if the lack of an explicit common goal led participants to believe that the shared vision aligned with their personal vision.

The questions then shifted to exploring more about personal visions asking: *Were you aware of other patrol members' personal visions? If yes, What was shared with you and why do you think that was important? If no, Why not? Do you think this contributed to your patrol's ability to create a shared vision?* Julia stated that because she self-identifies as an introvert, "I wouldn't have asked." However, the course did ask as part of a patrol activity early in the course. As Duke recalled, questions were asked such as: What do you want to get, why are you here and what did you want to get out of it? However, it appeared that, like Julia, the other interviewees do not remember that discussion. This leaves the researcher to question whether some patrols did not do that activity with their troop guide? Or, were the responses too vague from participants, or was the discussion so early in the course that participants were not yet bonded and therefore not invested in listening to each other's answers. There is more work that could be done here to discover what happened and why peer personal visions did not get shared between participants.

Furthermore, Robyn and Jay equated personal visions with ticket items. Wood Badge Tickets are comprised of five different ticket goals that the participants set for themselves. With that in mind, interviewees were asked, *What are/were your Wood Badge Tickets?* Their responses are presented below in no particular order.

- Drug and alcohol program specific to Scouting values and law
- Add A/V to district meetings to increase participation due to large geographically diverse membership
- Engage scout troop with the local Dementia Live program (Diversity - working with elders)
- Teach scouts to sew on their own badges and take a sewing machine to meetings for their use.
- Talk to every unit in the district about the Order of the Arrow program
- Create an Order of the Arrow High adventure promotion committee for

the chapter

- Add A/V to Order of the Arrow Chapter meetings to increase participation due to large geographically diverse membership
- Red Cross First Aid and CPR certification
- Personal Fitness Goal (aligns with Scouts being Physically Fit)
- Teach a merit badge to a group
- Become a Merit Badge counselor for the new Diversity Merit Badge and teach it
- Take a course to improve orienteering skills to better teach scouts
- Teach Leave No Trace at University of Scouting
- Teach Paul Bunyan Award at district level at University of Scouting
- Talk to units within the District about earning an Interpreter Strip (Diversity)
- LifeGuard Certification to become Swimming Merit Badge Counselor
- Chaplain Training to become troop's religious emblems coordinator
- Outreach to Cub Scout Packs to promote troops
- Create Welcome Presentation for new and potential families
- Create Scouts BSA flyer in English and Spanish for social workers to use to promote scouting to families
- Parent Guide for new troop parents
- Build portable escape room to take to events for recruitment

Each of these projects is designed with the aim of benefiting the Scouter's home unit and local community. Tickets are the tool that the course uses to guide participants in applying their learning in the scouting community immediately after training and start to practice what they have learned. Note that for this course, the guidance for the tickets was that at least one goal had to be diversity focused. Through the completion of these projects, participants not only grow their own skills and practice what they learned in Wood Badge, but they also enhance the Scouting program as a whole.

### ***Team Learning***

Teams take time to develop and must foster collaboration. Senge (2006) presents the elements of Team Learning as thinking insightfully, taking innovative action, and interrelationship with other teams. Teams develop new forms of shared knowledge when

they learn and grow together. Survey respondents were asked, *Did your peers listen to your ideas?* All of the respondents responded positively with 55 % stating they were often listened to and 45% always being listened to. The converse was also asked, *Did you listen to your peer's ideas?* Respondents indicated that they felt more strongly about their ability to listen to their peers; 62% felt they always listened and 38% often listened. Overall, the survey indicated that participants listened to peers.

To understand more about how Team Learning was present in Wood Badge, interviewees were asked, *How strong do you feel your patrol was at working together as a team and learning together as a team?* Duke shared that a solid foundation for Team Learning had been built because, “Everybody wanted to be there. Everybody was there to try to improve themselves so they put the effort into it.” Patrols are not only the foundational unit of Wood Badge, but they are also the main functional unit of scout troops. In this way, the adult Team Learning at Wood Badge mirrored the youth learning in troops.

As the Wood Badge course progresses, patrols transition from having discussions, where participants have a goal to win, to having dialogue, where participants build on each other's input to collaboratively create new outcomes where everybody wins. Robyn was very clear that her patrol had hit this standard when describing how they worked together to meet objectives throughout the second weekend of the course:

...when certain tasks needed to happen, somebody would step forward, take that leadership position, and it would just be taken care of and then everybody else kind of followed in line as far as, you know, helping that support, being in a

supporting role. And it just happened very organically and very naturally not forced. No power struggles. Everybody was really comfortable; we all really clicked really well, even though we're very different. And boom, really cool experience. We worked really well together ... bouncing ideas off of each other as well.

Other participants interviewed had different experiences within their patrols. Jay described conflict within his patrol as having two alpha dogs in the yard at the beginning of the course but that by the end of the course the patrol “started to gel and understand each other and work more effectively.” Julia related that while other groups she has been in have frequently had one person barreling over everyone else, her Wood Badge patrol for this course had a synergy based on an equitable balance of peer expectations and attitudes; “We were all kind of coming at it on that middle ground which was comfortable.” So as a whole, it appears that most patrols figured out how to work together.

One way that teams are successful is through innovative action. This occurs when team members work together to create new ways of doing things or thinking. To better understand how this presented itself in the course, interviewees were asked, *How was your thinking challenged by other team members?* Duke acknowledged the diverse background of the patrol members. Robyn expanded on that concept, sharing that they had deep discussions about diversity, “got pretty deep into that stuff and it was really comfortable but it was more than just a surface conversation.” Julie shared about how the patrol gave her space to acclimate and get more comfortable, increasingly calling on her

for input as time passed. Julia stated that “they changed my thinking in a very positive way, in that if I present my challenges, it's possible that the people around me will respond positively to that.” She dove deeper into that topic, sharing that in her view, society is built for extroverts, but that the way the patrol developed as a team was helpful for her personally as well as a scout leader. Julia clearly developed skills she will be able to use with her scout units going forward. Jay also self-identified as an introvert but shared that when working with a group one needs to swallow their pride and “say and think a different way or adapt, you know, to a way that they're wanting to do things. Julia also pointed out that it was key to the process that the patrols remained the same throughout the entire Wood Badge Course. This allowed the patrols to go through the stages of Tuckman’s model - Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing.

Interviewees were asked: *What are the strengths and weaknesses of learning in patrols?* Julie was quick to note that the small patrols were beneficial because there was an ability for every voice to be heard. Robyn talked about many hands making light work in addition to developing skills of being a leader as well as a follower. Duke highlighted the importance of working and developing as a team rather than just going out and doing your own thing. He said that while that is a strength, it can also be a weakness or challenge, because you do not finish a challenge until your whole patrol finishes and sometimes the patrol members struggle with that. Jay compared and contrasted the sharing of ideas which can build great collaboration and strengthen a patrol building comraderies, but in contrast can create conflict; “Strengths...more minds volunteering ideas off each other and everyone else, then a problem is when you have somebody that

doesn't want to give up their position or their idea... like alpha dogs ... unwilling to compromise in the situation.” Robyn brought up the opposite challenge to alpha dogs, having team members that do not step up or carry their weight. While she stated that she did not experience this in her patrol, she mentioned that she had experienced that in other team settings. Overall, learning in patrols was clearly a strength for this course allowing the participants to work through the stages of team building and participate in Team Learning and have time to reflect on it.

The last element of Senge’s Team Learning is interrelationship with other teams. While interviewees were not specifically asked about this, there is an all-patrol challenge near the end of the course that allows the patrols to work together. This requires collaboration within patrols as well as between patrols. At least on my course, this challenge was met with success. So while the patrols do take time to develop and foster collaboration, they were able to do so effectively over the course of the five days. Teams (patrols) were able to develop new forms of shared knowledge as they learned and grew together by thinking insightfully and taking innovative action.

### ***Systems Thinking***

Systems thinking is composed of the disciplines and processes across Scouts BSA that manifest themselves into the system and looks at the interrelationships that are impacting the whole, rather than the individual parts. One key element of Systems Thinking is universal language within the organization. Scouts BSA has a universal language. In other words, there are a set of terms that are unique to scouting. The survey asked: *There are a set of terms unique to scouting. How familiar are you with those*



*terms?* Except for one outlier respondent who indicated that they were very unfamiliar with the terms, the survey respondents indicated that they were either familiar, 33%, or very familiar, 63%, with the terms. Because I had only been involved with scouting for two years prior to participating in Wood Badge, I fell into the familiar range.

The interviewees were asked: *How did you learn these terms and why do you think they are important?* Julia set the groundwork stating, “I think any group has their own little language... I think that exists, because when you're all familiar with the same environment, you develop shortcuts to your conversations.” However, she clarified, stating that while she understands where the universal language originates in an organization she was unclear about the importance of it. Jay talked about the implications of different terms. For example, a group of cub scouts is called a den, but a group of boy scouts is called a patrol. He said that it is important to understand the difference between them because of the change in responsibilities that goes with the change in terms. Dens are adult-led and patrols are youth-led and the adults are now expected to be hands off. Jay said that understanding that Scout-led really means “not being so much hands on, because it was very hard when I first joined.” Julia talked about just plain asking people to slow down and explain a term when she did not understand it. Robyn explained that she learned the terms over time due to her involvement in scouts, however “through Wood Badge, I definitely learned a lot more details about the program and ... that big picture of how Boy Scouts operates.” Robyn’s observation that,

...no two troops look exactly the same, but there are definitely some strong universal components that you share with scouts not just nationally but

internationally, and that creates that connectivity that I think is important to scouting and to the organization into its mission.

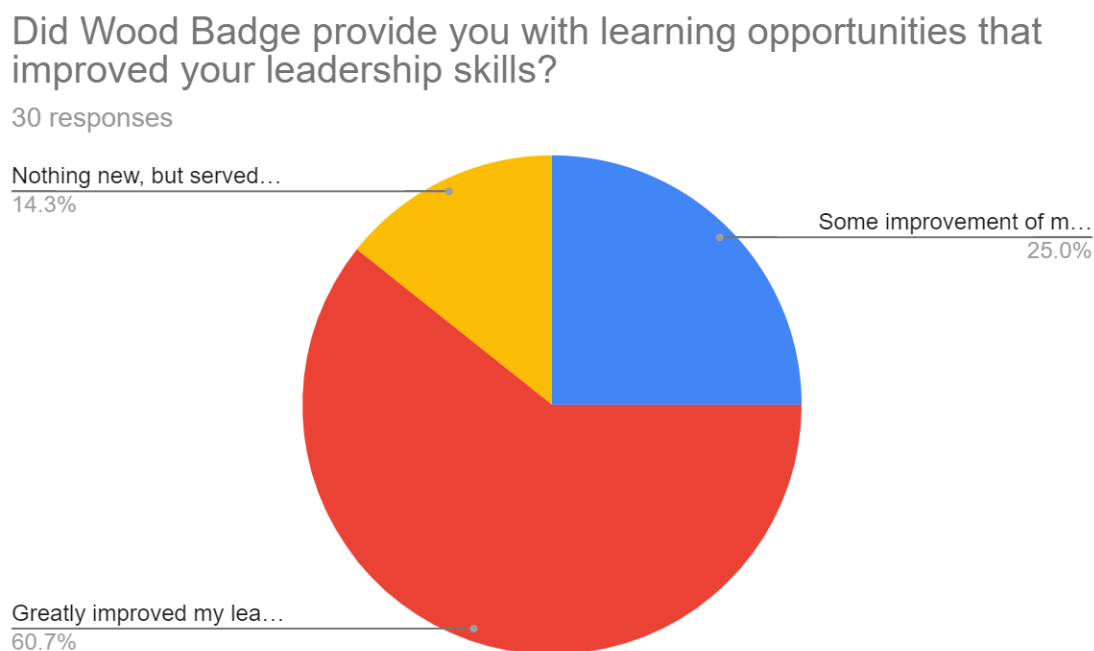
This succinctly captured the core of the value of having a universal language in scouting. Another thing that was not explored at this time was that there are multiple programs in scouting. Wood Badge mostly focuses on the traditional scout troop, however, there are also Venturing Crews, Sea Scout Ships, Explorer Posts, and in some areas the new STEM Scouts that are also under the Scouts BSA umbrella. Therefore, while there is a universal language in scouting around troops, that language shifts when talking about a crew, ship or post. Any participant on this course that was part of a crew, ship or post was also in a troop and represented themselves as a troop member on course.

One of the survey questions around Systems Thinking asked interviewees about their relationship with the organization as a whole: *How did Wood Badge affect your view of Scouts BSA as an organization?* Jay acknowledged some of the historical challenges that Scouts BSA has faced but was quick to affirm that “when I hear all these negative things I just don't listen to them ... that's not scouting anymore.” Responses to the question were heavily correlated to prior scouting experience, ranging from Duke's response “I don't know if it's changed it at all.” to Julia's “I was blown away and impressed.” Duke reflected that he viewed the experience as leadership training parallel to what he would expect from any other organization or company. In contrast, Julia shared that “Wood Badge made [scouting] feel bigger” and that “building those leadership skills is just fantastic.” Like Julia, Robin was positive about her Wood Badge experience, “It definitely improved my image of scouts BSA. I was really impressed with

the program. I felt like I learned a lot. I feel like I took a lot away from Wood Badge. In summary, all interviewees felt that Wood Badge was a positive experience and had maintained or improved their view of Scouts BSA as an organization.” This was also my experience.

### Figure 7

*Survey participant's views of leadership skills improvement.*



The responses from the interviewees aligned with the survey responses (see Figure 7). The majority of those surveyed, 61%, felt that Wood Badge greatly improved their leadership skills. An additional 25% felt that there was some improvement of their leadership skills. In total, 86% felt that they walked away from Wood Badge with more leadership skills than when they had started the course. The remaining 14% affirmed that Wood Badge provided a refresher for their leadership skills but in their view did not teach

them anything new. As someone with extensive experience in leadership, I had not expected to learn new things from this course, however, many of the leadership frameworks in the course were presented in new ways and/or from new perspectives resulting in enhanced leadership skills for even an experienced participant.

Interviewees were then asked: *How do you think a different participant's experience would have been the same or different as yours?* This tied in well to the next question that was asked: *How do you think your experience would have been the same or different if you had been assigned to a different patrol?*

Duke captured the essence of everyone's response to these questions by stating that:

You can't give everybody a similar experience. All you can do is give them similar activities they're going to take out what they want out of it. If somebody was there because it was mandated from their troop, this is if you want to be a leader in our troop you have to go through this program, they would most likely have had a different experience from the five people in our patrol. We all had a different experience because we have different life experiences; we have different backgrounds, you know, we were different ages, different geographic areas so realistically everybody's probably was different than us just because everybody is different.

Robyn also noted that different patrol guides would be a contributing factor to different experiences as well.

Every single survey respondent, 30/30, indicated that they would recommend Wood Badge to other Scouters. I would also recommend Wood Badge to any adult

involved in Scouts BSA. The interviewees were asked: *Think about who you have or would like to recommend Wood Badge training to. Why would you make the recommendation to that person?* Jay was recommending it to someone as “eye opening on scouting and leadership.” Duke spoke about the benefits of multiple adult leaders in a unit working more effectively together if they had obtained the Wood Badge training, “that could really make a more cohesive organization and flow for the troop, if the majority of our adults in our troop had been through, it would probably make that a more functional more progressive type of a group.” All of the interviewees had people they would recommend the course to and had already actively talked to people about attending future courses.

Duke advocated for Wood Badge because of the uniqueness of the program. “Scouting is the industry. I've been through leadership programs but not necessarily specific to [my industry]. Well, this is specific to the industry.” He explained that while there are other, in his words “generic”, leadership programs available, some of which he has taken, Wood Badge is unique because of the way they implement the EDGE method within the program. “You as a participant are being trained to lead. So not only is the leadership being instructed to you. It's being demonstrated to you and then you have the opportunity to practice it and experience it.” Only 27% of participants had received any formal training with other volunteer organizations they have been involved in. This demonstrates the unique opportunity that the Scouts BSA Wood Badge training provides participants.

## Summary

The primary research question of this study was: *In what ways are the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization present in the training of adult volunteer leaders (Scouters) in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge?* The results of the research demonstrate that the Wood Badge course clearly incorporates most elements of the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization. Personal Mastery was evident in the growth demonstrated by individual participants; Mental Models were evident in the framework that was provided by interviewees about Scouts BSA; Building a Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking were developed and demonstrated throughout the course as the patrols developed and worked through their challenges.

The secondary research question of this study was: *How does the prevalence or absence of each of Senge's five disciplines affect Scouters' perceptions of Wood Badge training?* It is clear from the interviews that participants of Wood Badge perceived Wood Badge as a positive training experience. However, the dependency of this perception of Wood Badge due to the prevalence or absence of each of Senge's five disciplines cannot be concluded based on the data gathered. The following chapter provides a conclusion drawn from the survey, interview, and participant observation and their connections to the literature reviewed in chapter two. The chapter also discusses limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

“...learning requires much more than good intentions and a few tools. It has to become deeply embedded in the fabric of how an organization works if it is to have a real impact”  
(Senge, 2006, p. 314)

#### Chapter Overview

This chapter provides connections to the literature review, presents a summary of the limitations, and recommendations for future research.

The primary research question of this study is: *In what ways are the five disciplines of Senge’s learning organization present in the training of adult volunteer leaders (Scouters) in Scouts BSA’s Wood Badge?* The secondary research question of this study is: *How does the prevalence or absence of each of Senge’s five disciplines affect Scouters’ perceptions of Wood Badge training?*

The assumption made going into this research was that Scouts BSA is a learning organization. Scouts BSA is a learning organization because of its commitment to keeping the organization focused on being prepared to serve the youth. Senge (1996) wrote that leaders are those within an organization who are committed to change in both themselves and the organization by developing new skills, capabilities and understandings (p. 45). Participants in Wood Badge exemplify this standard by volunteering to better themselves and then complete tickets to better the organization. Wood Badge exemplifies the train-the-trainer model. The staff of Wood Badge is past participants of Wood Badge. The Wood Badge participants themselves go back to their units and train the Scouters and scouts in their units in the same way. A parallel training

occurs at the youth level through the National Youth Leadership Training, which is a mirror of Wood Badge held at the youth level with youth staff training youth participants.

Scouts BSA is also proven to be a learning organization in the way that it has grown throughout its history and continually adjusts to meet current needs. Examples include: adding council-led Wood Badge Courses when the need for courses outgrew the national course capacity; adding females to the programming; improving Youth Protection Training in response to changing demands; and adding a new program called STEM Scouting. All these pieces tie directly back to the mission: “The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.”

(Northern Star Scouting, 2021, p. 7)

The Wood Badge course incorporates elements of all five disciplines of Senge’s learning organization. Personal Mastery was evident in the growth demonstrated by individual participants; Mental Models were evident in the framework that was provided by interviewees about Scouts BSA; Building a Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking were developed and demonstrated throughout the course as the patrols developed and worked through their challenges. All Scouters had positive feedback about the Wood Badge course and were recommending it for others. This endorsement can be viewed as a result of the course’s alignment with Senge’s disciplines.

### **Major Learnings and Connections to Literature Review**

This study viewed Scouts BSA as a learning organization and looked at Scouts BSA’s top level adult leadership training program, Wood Badge. Wood Badge is a



longer-commitment leadership program for staff and volunteers that goes beyond the basics of what is needed to run a Scout Troop. The literature review in chapter two gave an overview of the history of Scouts BSA provided the foundational background and universal language for a better understanding of the purpose of the Wood Badge Course and the participants. This research leveraged not only the researcher's personal experience in the program but also interviewed peers and course trainers about their experiences. Because Scouts BSA can be viewed as a learning organization and Senge was used as the primary text around learning organizations in my graduate coursework, Senge was used as the base for this study (Senge, 2006).

The Tenets of Scouting were presented in Chapter Two. One of the eight methods of scouting contributing to both good character and good citizenship is Leadership Development. Not only does the Scouting program encourage Scouts to learn and practice leadership skills, it provides opportunities for Scouters to do the same through the Wood Badge program. Just as every Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared leadership situations, Wood Badge provides the opportunity for Scouters to participate in shared leadership situations throughout the course. Therefore, the method of scouting that leads to an understanding the concepts of leadership and becoming a servant leader is not only provided to scouts who participate in the Scouts BSA program, but to Scouters who participate in Wood Badge.

Personal Growth, another method of scouting, is also present in Wood Badge as well as being an integral part of Senge's five disciplines. Personal Growth as a method of scouting aligns with the first disciplines, Personal Mastery. A third method of scouting

that is clearly present in both Wood Badge and in Senge's five disciplines of leadership is the patrol method. The patrol method gives Scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. Wood Badge successfully implements patrols in alignment with Baden-Powell's vision for scouting (Montclair State University, 2019, p. 3). The patrols not only model scouting units, but serve to facilitate Team Learning which is one of Senge's disciplines. The BEST Study had advocated for the use of the patrol method in training, and Wood Badge clearly implements that, effectively allowing for strong Team Learning as described by Senge. These strong patrols also allowed for the development of Mental Models, another of Senge's disciplines. As the participants discussed their learnings and built interpretations of the events of the day. It is through all of these practices that Wood Badge creates the last discipline of Building a Shared Vision. The motto of this specific course was *It's about the youth*. This was clearly the shared vision of all participants by the end of the week.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While Scouts BSA and Northern Star Council are not funding my research, they are providing access to materials and providing necessary permissions. Scouts BSA has been conducting the Building Evidence in Scouting Together (BEST) Study. Full BEST Study results were not available at the time this research was conducted, so future research may be needed to connect the BEST study results and the results found in this research into Wood Badge and this learning organization.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

All interviewees had become involved as adults when their children began to participate in Cub Scouts. While not specifically asked, many of the staff of Wood Badge no longer had scouts actively participating in Scouting because they had grown up and aged out of the program. One suggestion for future research is to investigate how many people volunteer as adults before having kids in the program/during having kids/ stay active after kids in the program—if so for how long?

When discussing Mental Models, it was noted that none of the participants journaled. Is this something that should be built into the schedule more, or perhaps this is not needed? This is an area that could be explored further for future Wood Badge Courses to see if it makes a difference for participant outcomes.

When discussing shared vision, it was noted that the patrols did not collaborate to develop a shared vision. Participants felt that the goals set out by the Wood Badge course were providing a shared vision and guidance and they did not discuss or refine that outline. As a researcher I wonder if the lack of an explicit common goal led participants to believe that the shared vision aligned with their personal vision? However, the majority of the interviewed participants did not remember discussion about their personal visions. This leaves the researcher to question whether some patrols did not do that activity with their troop guide? Or, were the responses too vague from participants, or was the discussion so early in the course that participants were not yet bonded and therefore not invested in listening to each other's answers. There is more work that could

be done here to discover what happened and why personal visions did not become anchored for participants.

In Systems Thinking, a participant questioned the importance of a universal language. Perhaps a universal language itself is not important but being able to understand the universal language is important. If conducting the interviews again, I would rephrase the question to make it clearer, asking about understanding universal language rather than identifying it.

The Northern Star Council will receive a copy of this dissertation. The council has a committee that oversees the Wood Badge Courses and they will be able to review the results. There are also Scouters across the United States that have shown interest in this work during the course of the research and digital copies of the paper will be shared with them. A digital copy will be on file with the National Scouting Museum at Philmont Scout Ranch. The dissertation will also be available through Hamline's digital commons.

### **Summary**

This chapter provides a conclusion to this research including connections to the literature review, presents a summary of the limitations, and includes recommendations for future research. Chapter One provided a general introduction to the topics and research questions. Chapter Two, the Literature Review, built a foundation in Scouts BSA as a whole, as well as an in-depth look into the Wood Badge program. In addition, it unpacked Senge's five disciplines of a Learning Organization. Chapter Three described how the combination of my participation in Wood Badge, participant surveys and selected participant interviews were used to answer the primary and secondary research

questions.

The primary research question of this study was: *In what ways are the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization present in the training of adult volunteer leaders (Scouters) in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge?* The results of the research demonstrate that the Wood Badge course is a clear example of how Scouts BSA incorporates elements of the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization.

The secondary research question of this study was: *How does the prevalence or absence of each of Senge's five disciplines affect Scouters' perceptions of Wood Badge training?* It is clear from the interviews that participants of Wood Badge perceived Wood Badge as a positive training experience. However, the dependency of this perception of Wood Badge due to the prevalence or absence of each of Senge's five disciplines cannot be concluded based on the data gathered.

The purpose of this study was to explore the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization observed in the training of adult volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge in 2021. The five disciplines provided a clear framework through which to gain insight into Scouts BSA's Wood Badge training program. Future Wood Badge training course revisions should continue to be reviewed through this lens in order to maintain a strong volunteer leadership development program.

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## APPENDIX A - Interview Questions

### Get to know you question

Why are you involved in Scouting?

Note: If a participant is NOT first time on course, ask that they respond to questions based on THIS time on course rather than past experiences on course.

### *Questions that drive toward each of Senge's disciplines.*

#### Personal Mastery

What led you to participate in Wood Badge?

- a. If this is not the participant's first time, follow up with asking why they came back if not included in the original response.
- b. Is this type of learning experience something you typically seek out?

What was your personal goal for participating in Wood Badge?

What are/were your Wood Badge Tickets?

Make sure interviewee covers what the ticket was, why it was selected, and reflects on the outcome/result/impact of the work (if completed).

#### Mental Models

What are some assumptions or stereotypes about Scouts BSA you feel you may have entered Scouts BSA with?

Entered Wood Badge with?

How did you take the time to reflect on your learnings? For example, did you meditate on your day, write in a journal, campfire or other discussions with other patrol members?

Did your patrol hold any post-mortems after any of the activities?

Any other ways you reflected?

### **Building a Shared Vision**

Did your patrol develop a common shared goal for the weekend? Was this goal implied or explicitly stated? What was the goal and did it align with your personal vision? If not, why do you think that did not happen?

What role did you play in the creation of your patrol's shared vision?

Were you aware of other patrol member's personal visions? Yes - What was shared with you and why do you think that was important or NO - Why not? Do you think this contributed to your patrol's ability to create a shared vision?

### **Team Learning**

How strong do you feel your patrol was at working together as a team and learning together as a team?

Make sure participant shares specific examples to support their answer.

How was your thinking challenged by other team members?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of learning in patrols?

Think about who you have or would like to recommend Wood Badge training to.

Why would you make the recommendation to that person?

Additional questions as follow up from survey results.

### **Systems Thinking**

Scouts BSA has a universal language. In other words, there are a set of terms that are unique to scouting. How did you learn these terms and why do you think they are important?

How did Wood Badge affect your view of Scouts BSA as an organization?

How do you think a different participant's experience would have been the same or different as yours?

If you had been assigned to a different patrol?

If you were a first timer vs a returning staffer (or vice versa)?

### **Wrap-up Question:**

Anything else you would like to share on this topic that we have not already covered?

## APPENDIX B - Wood Badge Participant Survey

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. I am an active co-participant in Wood Badge completing my dissertation for my Doctorate in Education from Hamline University. My research will present aggregated information and use pseudonyms for anyone interviewed.

1. How do you identify?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Prefer not to say
  
2. Ethnicity/Race (open entry)
  
3. Age Grouping
  - 21 and under
  - 22-29
  - 30-39
  - 40-49
  - 50-59
  - 60-69
  - 70+
  
4. What is the highest level of education you have completed
  - High School not complete
  - High School
  - 2-year degree or trade school certification
  - 4-year degree
  - Master's Degree
  - Doctorate
  
5. Were you in scouting (Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts) as a youth?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
6. If yes: How many years were you in Scouting as a Youth? (open entry)
  
7. If yes: Were you a

- a. Boy Scout
- b. Girl Scouts

8. If Boy Scouts: What was the highest rank you earned as a youth?

- Scout
- Tenderfoot
- Second Class
- First Class
- Star
- Life
- Eagle

9. If Girl Scouts: What was the highest award you earned in Girl Scouts?

- Bronze
- Silver
- Gold
- Other

10. Number of years volunteering with Scouts BSA (open entry)

11. Current Position with Scouts BSA (open entry)

12. What other organizations, if any, have you actively volunteered with in the past five years? (open entry)

13. Have you received any formal training with any other volunteer organizations?  
Yes/No

14. What is your current (or if retired, past) career outside of Scouts BSA? (ie: teacher, plumber, pediatrician, etc.)

15. How many times have you been on course with Wood Badge?

- First time on course
- Second time on course
- Third time on course
- Four or more times on course

16. Which patrol were you in for this course? (open entry)

17. There are a set of terms unique to scouting. How familiar are you with those terms?
- 1 Very Unfamiliar
  - 2 Unfamiliar
  - 3 Familiar
  - 4 Very Familiar
18. What led you to participate in this Wood Badge course? (open entry)
19. Did your patrol take time to unpack and reflect on activities as a group?
- 1 Never
  - 2 Rarely
  - 3 Often
  - 4 Always
20. Did you take time to unpack and reflect on activities as an individual?
- 1 Never
  - 2 Rarely
  - 3 Often
  - 4 Always
21. Did you have a personal goal for the course?
- a. Yes, I had one before I came and it stayed the same through the course
  - b. Yes, I had one before I came, but it changed during the course
  - c. Yes, I did not have one before I came, but I had one by the end of the course
  - d. No, I never had a personal goal before, during or after the course
22. Did your patrol have a shared goal for the course?
- a. Yes, we created a shared goal and it stayed the same throughout the course
  - b. Yes, we created a shared goal, and it shifted during the course
  - c. No, we never created a shared goal during the course
23. Did your peers listen to your ideas?
- 1 Never
  - 2 Rarely
  - 3 Often
  - 4 Always

24. Did you listen to your peers' ideas?
- 1 Never
  - 2 Rarely
  - 3 Often
  - 4 Always
25. Did Wood Badge provide you with learning opportunities that improved your leadership skills?
- a. No improvement and not beneficial use of my time
  - b. Nothing new, but served as a refresher course
  - c. Some improvement of my leadership skills
  - d. Greatly improved my leadership skills
26. How did Wood Badge change your view of Scouts BSA?
- a. Greatly decreased my view of Scouts BSA
  - b. Decreased my view of Scouts BSA
  - c. Improved my view of Scouts BSA
  - d. Greatly improved my view of Scouts BSA
27. Would you recommend Wood Badge to other Scouters?
28. Are you willing to participate in a follow up interview?
- a. If yes, please enter your name and the best email to reach you.



## APPENDIX C - Informed Consent Form

*Hamline University*

Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form.

IRB approval # 2021-04-143E

Approved: 4/9/2021



### ***Informed Consent to Participate in Research***

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The student researcher or faculty researcher (Principal Investigator) will provide you with a copy of this form to keep for your reference, and will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions.

This form provides important information about what you will be asked to do during the study, about the risks and benefits of the study, and about your rights as a research participant.

- If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the research team for more information.
- You should feel free to discuss your potential participation with anyone you choose, such as family or friends, before you decide to participate.
- Do not agree to participate in this study unless the research team has answered your questions and you decide that you want to be part of this study.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.

**Title of Research Study:** Scouts BSA Wood Badge through the lens of Senge's Disciplines of a Learning Organization

**Student Researcher:** Wendy Marik wmarik01@hamline.edu

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Trish Harvey, Assistant Professor, School of Education, tharvey03@hamline.edu

**1. What is the research topic, the purpose of the research, and the rationale for why this study is being conducted?** The primary subject of this research is to study the presence of Senge's disciplines of a learning organization in Scouts BSA's Wood Badge Program. Given that Scouts BSA is a learning organization working to train adult volunteers to be more effective leaders, this study looks at gaining a better understanding of how this occurs. In order to study this, an emailed online survey and semi structured interviews conducted with select participants will be conducted. It is the purpose of this survey and subsequent interviews to explore the five disciplines of Senge's learning organization observed in the training of adult

volunteer leaders in Scouts BSA' Wood Badge.

- 2. What will you be asked to do if you decide to participate in this research study?** If you decide to participate, there are two possible ways to participate. The first is to participate in filling out the survey via email to be a part of the research. Once the survey is filled out and sent back to the researcher, you may also participate in a 30-minute semi-structured audio-recorded interview with the researcher. Consent for the interview will be obtained auditorily prior to the interview. The interview location is up to the participant yet likely on-line through google meet or zoom due to the covid-19 pandemic. The questions in the interview pertain to the interviewee's participation in the Wood Badge Course. You may opt-out of this research at any time without consequence. All research will be performed on-line.
- 3. What will be your time commitment to the study if you participate?** If you choose to be a part of this study, you will fill out the survey (15 minutes) and possibly an interview (30 minutes). Total time of 45 minutes, approximately. This will be over the course of up to two months.
- 4. Who is funding this study?** This research is being conducted without funding
- 5. What are the possible discomforts and risks of participating in this research study?** By participating in this study, there is a small chance you become uncomfortable with the survey and/or the interview. It is important that you are aware that this is a voluntary study. You may abstain from any question or statement presented by the researcher, Wendy Marik. There is a small risk of loss of confidentiality. If this occurs, step six in this document outlines what will occur if a loss of confidentiality does indeed take place. Steps will be taken to minimize loss of confidentiality at each step along the path of this research.

In addition, there may be risks that are currently unknown or unforeseeable. Please contact me at [wmarik01@hamline.edu](mailto:wmarik01@hamline.edu) or cell 651-246-4903, or my faculty advisor Dr. Trish Harvey at [tharvey03@hamline.edu](mailto:tharvey03@hamline.edu) or 651-523-2532 to discuss this if you wish.

- 6. How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your data and research records be protected?**
- Privacy and confidentiality are of the utmost importance to this research case study. The researcher will provide a number of safeguards for protection. The participant survey will be conducted in an online format through google forms. The only person who will have access to this information will be Wendy Marik, the researcher. That information will be kept within the google programs of forms and survey. The semi-structured

interview is confidential, recorded through the online platform. The research will use the interview for data analysis in an online format only. After the interview analysis is complete, the data will be deleted upon the approval of the dissertation.

If confidentiality is lost, you will be contacted immediately and all forms of data will be destroyed.

**7. How many people will most likely be participating in this study, and how long is the entire study expected to last?**

All 50-70 Winter 2021 Wood Badge participants, including staff, have been sent the survey and asked to participate with the goal to finish in two months. It would be ideal for five participants to be in the semi-structured interview.

**8. What are the possible benefits to you and/or to others from your participation in this research study?**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with Hamline University. In addition, if significant new findings develop during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to continue participation, we will provide that information to you.

**9. If you choose to participate in this study, will it cost you anything?**

Participation in this study will not cost anything.

**10. Will you receive any compensation for participating in this study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**11. What if you decide that you do not want to take part in this study? What other options are available to you if you decide not to participate or to withdraw?**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate in the study, and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with Hamline University or Scouts BSA. In addition, if significant new findings develop during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to continue participation, we will provide that information to you.

**12. How can you withdraw from this research study, and who should you contact if you have any questions or concerns?**

You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should tell the researcher, Wendy Marik, or contact her at

[wmarik01@hamline.edu](mailto:wmarik01@hamline.edu) or 651-246-4903, or faculty advisor Dr. Trish Harvey at [tharvey03@hamline.edu](mailto:tharvey03@hamline.edu) or 651-523-2532 for any questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints about the research and your experience as a participant in the study. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board at Hamline University at [IRB@hamline.edu](mailto:IRB@hamline.edu).

**13. Are there any anticipated circumstances under which your participation may be terminated by the researcher(s) without your consent?**

There are no circumstances under which your participation would be terminated by the researcher without your consent.

**14. Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study?**

The researcher will gain no benefit from your participation in this study beyond the publication and/or presentation of the results obtained from the study, and the invaluable research experience and hands-on learning that the students will gain as a part of their educational experience.

**15. Where will this research be made available once the study is completed?**

The research will be made available through the Hamline Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and may be published or used in other ways, such as in conference presentations or published in research journals.

**16. Has this research study received approval from Northern Star Council of Scouts BSA where the research will be conducted?**

Yes, Northern Star Council of Scouts BSA has approved this research. The email is being distributed to participants via the Wood Badge Course participant and staffing distribution list and will not be used throughout the research.

**17. Will your information be used in any other research studies or projects?**

No - your information collected as part of this research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used in or distributed for future research studies.

**PARTICIPANT COPY****Signatures:**

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent Date  
(Student researcher or PI)

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Title of person obtaining consent

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name of Participant Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Principal Investigator or Faculty Advisor Date

**INVESTIGATOR COPY**  
**(Duplicate signature page for researcher's records)**

**Signatures:**

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent Date  
(Student researcher or PI)

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Printed Name of Participant Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Principal Investigator or Faculty Advisor Date