Teaching Note

Deployment or Demotion

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Critical Incident Overview

Captain Jack Thompson commanded a combat support company scheduled for a year-long deployment to Afghanistan. While his two platoon leaders were competent, each struggled with different aspects of leadership. 2LT Jeff Russell, the first platoon leader, embodied a *lead from the front* mentality, but struggled with administrative tasks and details. 2LT Jack Wagner excelled with administrative tasks, but failed to take charge when the mission began. The company was scheduled for a rotation at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, CA. CPT Thompson used this training event to evaluate his platoon leaders and determine if he needed to make a change in the leadership organization. The NTC rotation confirmed his opinions of the two platoon leaders. He faced a time-sensitive decision regarding his two platoons. He could leave the platoon leadership as it was, remove and reassign the platoon leaders elsewhere in the battalion, or reorganize the leadership internally in the company. This decision would have a lasting impact not only on the company as it prepared for deployment, but also on the careers of his platoon leaders.

This decision critical incident (CI) could be used in upper-level undergraduate, MBA, and master's courses in management, leadership, military science, or organizational behavior.

Research Methods

The CI is based on the experiences of one of the authors. Names and mission details have been disguised to protect anonymity.

Learning Outcomes

In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Assess the leadership and coaching skills of the unit leaders.
2. Evaluate available options and recommend a course of action.

Discussion Questions

1. What leadership skills do the two platoon leaders possess? Compare and contrast the leadership skills of the two platoon leaders on the basis of Clawson's (2012) VCM model and Kotter's (1990) view of leadership versus management. (LO 1)
2. What factors could be contributing to Russell's and Wagner's observed performance? Develop a concept map with "Suboptimal performance of Russell and Wagner" in the center. (LO 1)
3. How effective has CPT Thompson been as a coach to Russell and Wagner, and what have the results been? (LO 1)
4. Which of CPT Thompson's three options would be best? Why? Integrate your ideas from questions 1-3 to evaluate the three courses of action. (LO 2)

Answers to Discussion Questions

1. **What leadership skills do the two platoon leaders possess? Compare and contrast the leadership skills of the two platoon leaders on the basis of Clawson's (2012) VCM model and Kotter's (1990) view of leadership versus management. (LO 1)**

The Additional Teaching Materials section provides details on military hierarchy and the specific structure of the unit in the CI. These might be useful if students are not familiar with military subjects.

According to Clawson's (2012) visioning, commitment gathering, and monitoring and mentoring (VCM) model, leadership comprises three fundamental skill clusters: creating vision, garnering commitment to that vision, and monitoring and managing progress toward the realization of that vision. To compare and grade 2LT Russell and 2LT Wagner in these three areas, students should create a comparison table to evaluate the effectiveness of the two lieutenants. This exercise will reinforce the idea that management is not leadership; it is a component of leadership.

Table TN-1: Sample comparison table of two second lieutenants using Clawson's (2012) VCM model.

Leadership Skills Cluster	2LT Russell	2LT Wagner
Visioning (V): Ability to create a strategic view of what the organization will look like and do in the future	**Grade = B (good)** - Capable of establishing a direction, and his troops are following his lead - Strong tactical skills suggest strategic mindset	**Grade = C (average)** - Lack of experience and tactical skills in carrying out missions suggests average skills at best for seeing what needs to be done and establishing a direction for his troops
Commitment	**Grade = A (excellent)**	**Grade = D (poor)**

gathering (C): Ability to foster commitment to the vision from the people who are critical to his or her success	- Hands-on, "lead from the front" style generates referent power and trust with the people who are critical to his success - Instills culture of trust and professionalism	- Low involvement with troops and lack of a "lead from the front" mentality during combat breeds lack of trust and support - Soldiers do not consider him the first point of contact for issues/guidance

Monitoring and managing (M): Ability to monitor and manage progress toward the vision	**Grade = B (good)**
	 - Poor in planning, technical, and administrative skills. Received a below average mark in the pre-execution phase
	 - Strong in execution (tactical skills). Received outstanding tactical evaluations
	     o Suggests ability to energize his troops
	     o Being heavily involved in the field allows him to quickly respond to problems and put his troops in the best position to succeed
		Grade = C (average)
		 - Strong in planning, technical, and administrative skills. Received an outstanding rating in the pre-execution phase.
		 - Poor in execution (tactical skills) and relies heavily on his platoon sergeant to run day-to-day operations
		     o Could be a consequence of his limited military experience

(Clawson, 2012)

Kotter (1990) notes that leadership differs from management. For Kotter, the time horizon is different; leadership's focus is on dealing with change in the future, whereas management's focus is on dealing with complexity in the present. Kotter (1990) considers these differences in four dimensions.

- Agenda creation: Managers plan and budget, whereas leaders provide vision and direction.
- Network development: Managers create structures for organization and staffing, whereas leaders gain cooperation through word and deed.
- Execution: Managers primarily control and monitor to solve problems, whereas leaders motivate and inspire others to create solutions.
- Outcomes: Mangers stress predictability and consistency (e. g., on time, within budget), whereas leaders emphasize change and innovation. (p. 6)

Analysis of 2LT Russell and 2LT Wagner reveals that not everyone may be good at both leading and managing. Some people have the capacity to be strong managers but not great leaders while others have great leadership potential but have difficulty becoming strong managers.

Analysis of 2LT Russell
- Russell's platoon exceeds expectations, suggesting that he is capable of establishing a direction and his troops are following his lead. His sound tactical skills also suggest that

he can see what needs to be done in advance, a key element in Kotter's (1990) view of leadership.

- Russell's platoon's success illuminates his ability to garner commitment to his vision. Unlike Wagner, by involving himself in day-to-day operations and employment, Russell instills trust and confidence in his troops.
- Russell makes his troops feel part of something special, wanting to perform for him as part of a *reciprocal* relationship (Clawson, 2012). As a result, he uses referent power in leading. Clawson (2012) says that this form of power attracts the best, most voluntary, response possible.
- Russell's weaknesses surface in the area of management, which Clawson's (2012) VCM model argues is the third leg of leadership. While Russell executes missions successfully, he is deficient in planning and technical skills. CPT Thompson is concerned with these pre-execution issues because in real combat, the stakes are higher, the tempo is faster, and there is no margin for error.
- Russell demonstrates Clawson's (2012) visioning and commitment skills. In Kotter's (1990) terms, Russell would be more similar to a leader than a manager. However, his administrative skills and attention to detail have not improved under CPT Thompson's coaching. Job redesign or incentives aligned with improving this weakness could be necessary.

Analysis of 2LT Wagner
- Wagner appears to be more of a manager than a leader in the early stages of his military career.
- Wagner's visioning is difficult to assess, but his lack of both tactical skills and experience suggest that it is average at best. Compared with Russell, his administrative skills are much better and he excels in planning as opposed to establishing direction.
- Wagner has difficulty garnering commitment from his troops. Since Wagner has low involvement in day-to-day operations, his soldiers do not consider him the first point of contact for issues/guidance. Along with his failure to embody a "lead from the front" mentality, this suggests a problematic lack of trust and support.
- Wagner does not motivate or inspire, which is necessary for the execution focus in Kotter's (1990) concept of a leader. Troops are more inclined to follow a person like Russell into battle than the more distant Wagner.
- Wagner's problems appear to be deep and will require longer periods of developmental training in leadership.

2. **What factors could be contributing to Russell's and Wagner's observed performance? Develop a concept map with "Suboptimal performance of Russell and Wagner" in the center. (LO 1)**

What is Concept Mapping?

A concept map provides a visual tool to depict a set of ideas by linking them and explaining the connections. Concept mapping is a learning strategy first developed as a research tool to represent a learner's prior, relevant knowledge, and later as a tool to enhance meaningful

learning (Heinze-Frye & Novak, 1990). Maps consist of "concepts" and "linking words." Concepts are defined as perceived regularities of relationships within a group of objects or events, and are often designated by some sign or symbol (Novak & Gowin, 1984). Concepts are generally isolated by rectangles and connected by lines. Lines are labeled with "linking words" which describe how the connected concepts are related to each other. Linking words tend to be the most important and beneficial part of concept maps in that they reveal how and what the mapper feels about the concepts (Ditson, Kessler, Anderson-Inman & Mafit, 1998). Two connected concepts constitute a "propositional linkage," or a statement about how some piece of the world looks or works.

Concept maps are diagrams showing the mental connections and patterns of association a learner make for major concepts or between a major concept and other concepts they have learned (Angelo & Cross, 1993). In its simplest form, a concept map could be just two concepts connected by a linking word to form a proposition (Novak & Gowin, 1984). For example, "Deming's 14 points requires systems thinking" would represent a valid proposition about the concept "Deming's 14 points" and "systems thinking." Concept mapping is a technique for externalizing knowledge through drawings or diagrams, and for a learner's perceived representation of concepts and their interrelationships in a knowledge domain. It is a tool developed specifically to tap into a learner's mental map or cognitive structure and to make explicit, for both the learner and teacher to see, what the learner already knows (Novak & Gowin, 1984). Concept maps were developed by Novak in 1972 as a result of his research with others on concept learning in science courses.

Concept mapping may be applied in any academic discipline to make better sense of a reading, a case analysis, document learning or thinking, or brainstorming a project. Used expertly, it can substantially increase student understanding of difficult topics. There is growing recognition of the value of using a variety of formats and styles in teaching and facilitating. With concept maps, faculty members can broaden their teaching repertoire while showing students how to learn in authentic and active ways. Concept mapping is an extraordinarily powerful way to make visual connections between concepts. A very useful approach to using concept maps for case analysis in the classroom was identified by Kubitz (2012, personal communication).

The second author of this CI has used concept maps for years in different courses and found them to be very well suited for integrative assignments requiring students to draw on conceptual material from large parts of the course. He has used concept maps as a part of mid-term exams as well as final exams and found them to be useful tools for sharply focusing student attention on applied problem situations. Concept mapping is a tool for organizing the many factors that could be contributing to Russell's and Wagner's suboptimal performance. It also provides opportunity for students to identify and recommend solutions based on what the applied theory or concept says. Students might map relevant concepts in maps similar to those in the figures below (TN-1 and TN-2).

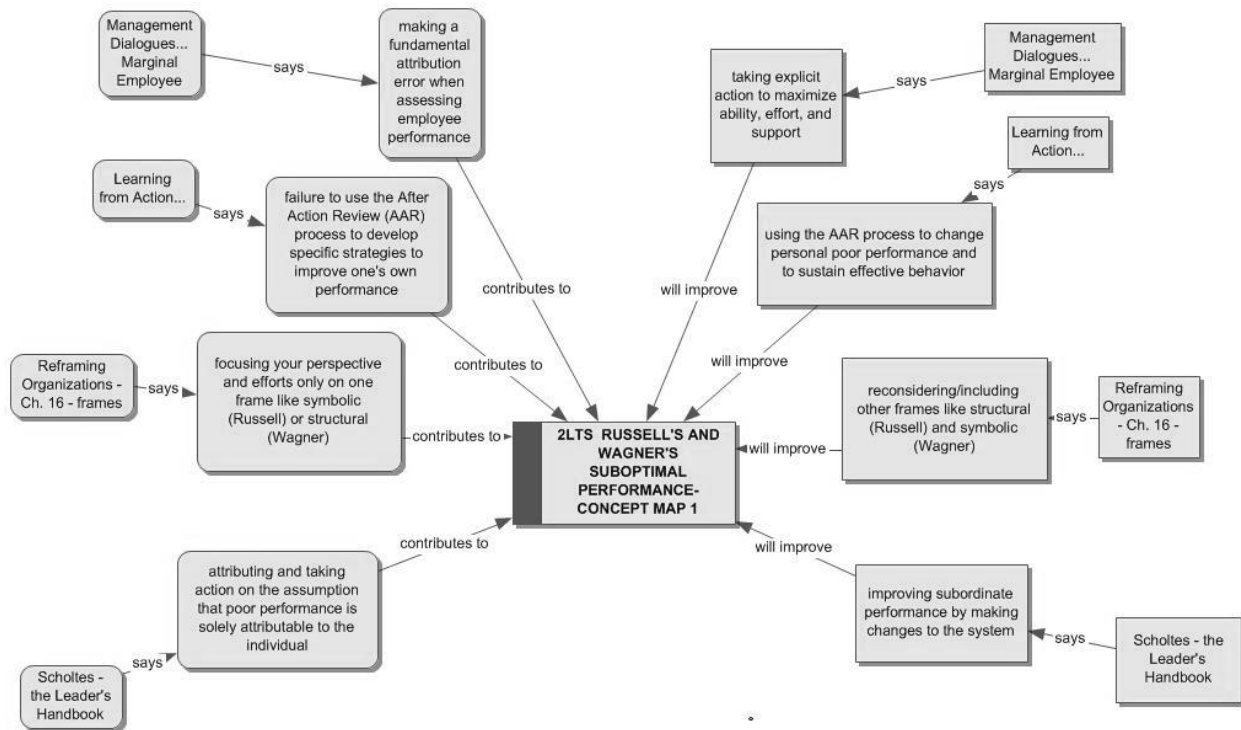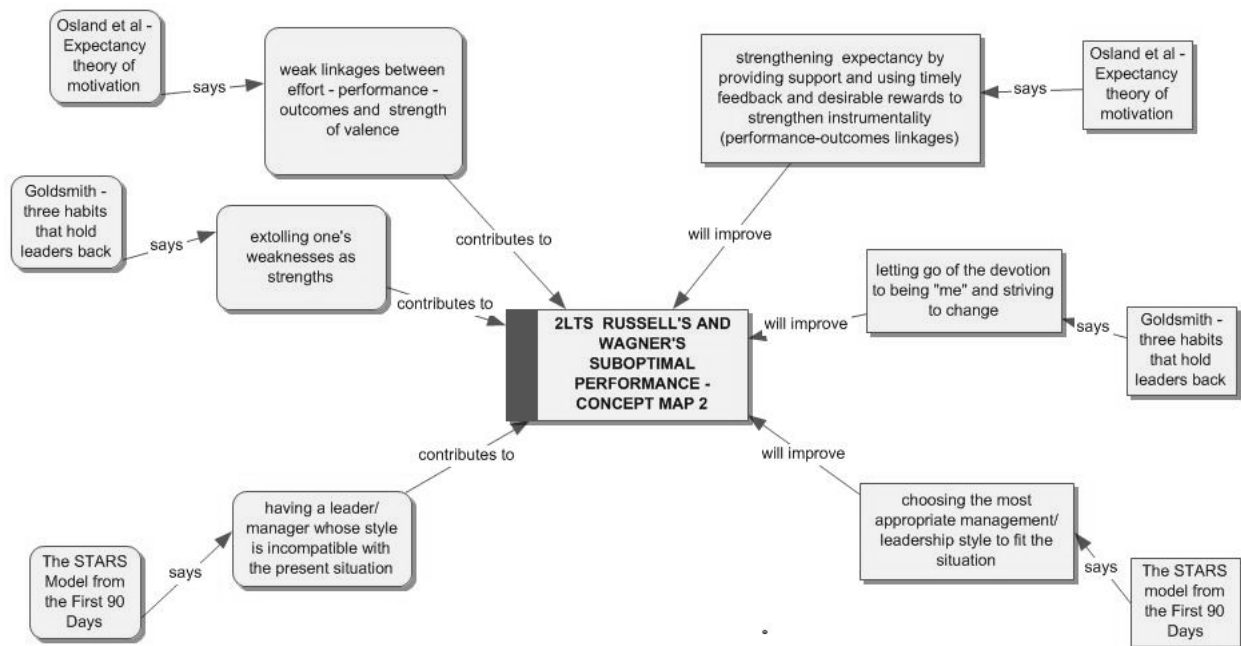*Figure TN-1*: Concept map 1 of Russell's and Wagner's management.

Management Dialogues... Marginal Employee
says → making a fundamental attribution error when assessing employee performance

taking explicit action to maximize ability, effort, and support
says ← Management Dialogues... Marginal Employee

Learning from Action...

Learning from Action...
says → failure to use the After Action Review (AAR) process to develop specific strategies to improve one's own performance

says → using the AAR process to change personal poor performance and to sustain effective behavior

contributes to

will improve

will improve

Reframing Organizations - Ch. 16 - frames
says → focusing your perspective and efforts only on one frame like symbolic (Russell) or structural (Wagner)

contributes to

reconsidering/including other frames like structural (Russell) and symbolic (Wagner)
says ← Reframing Organizations - Ch. 16 - frames

will improve

2LTS RUSSELL'S AND WAGNER'S SUBOPTIMAL PERFORMANCE- CONCEPT MAP 1

contributes to

will improve

attributing and taking action on the assumption that poor performance is solely attributable to the individual
says ← Scholtes - the Leader's Handbook

improving subordinate performance by making changes to the system
says ← Scholtes - the Leader's Handbook

Figure TN-2. Concept map 2 of Russell's and Wagner's management.

Osland et al - Expectancy theory of motivation
says → weak linkages between effort - performance - outcomes and strength of valence

strengthening expectancy by providing support and using timely feedback and desirable rewards to strengthen instrumentality (performance-outcomes linkages)
says ← Osland et al - Expectancy theory of motivation

Goldsmith - three habits that hold leaders back
says → extolling one's weaknesses as strengths

contributes to

will improve

letting go of the devotion to being "me" and striving to change
says ← Goldsmith - three habits that hold leaders back

contributes to

2LTS RUSSELL'S AND WAGNER'S SUBOPTIMAL PERFORMANCE - CONCEPT MAP 2

will improve

contributes to

will improve

The STARS Model from the First 90 Days
says → having a leader/ manager whose style is incompatible with the present situation

choosing the most appropriate management/ leadership style to fit the situation
says ← The STARS model from the First 90 Days

The class might deconstruct these concept maps in the following ways.

Management Dialogues: Turning on the Marginal Performer concept map source:
Managers commit fundamental attribution errors when attributing poor performance to personal reasons like a lack of ability or effort (motivation). CPT Thompson believed that suboptimal performance of his two 2LTs was their own fault and not his. Their continued failure to meet Thompson's expectations could lead to learned helplessness and diminishing performance after repeated failure to succeed. Schermerhorn, Gardner, and Martin (2005) urge managers to consider their role in the support component of the individual performance equation; that is, Performance = Ability x Effort x Support. A remedy to such marginal performance is to provide subordinates the individualized support they need to be successful.

Questions to ask about Ability are: How well do the individual's capabilities match the demands of the job? Has the individual been properly trained for the current task requirement?

Questions to ask about Support might include: Have specific hard goals been set? Is the job properly designed to achieve a "best fit" with the individual's capability? Is the manager providing sufficient empathy and emotional support? Has the manager actually encouraged high performance?

Questions to ask about Effort: Are rewards and incentives provided on a performance-contingent basis? Has the individual been recognized for past accomplishments?

The concept map reveals that CPT Thompson might work through an ability/effort/support checklist to determine the specific actions he should take to turn around the individual performance of his 2LTs. He might assign specific hard performance goals, provide recognition for goal accomplishment, and make sure there are other support players within the unit to overcome any specific weaknesses on the part of his 2LTs.

Learning from Action: Accelerating deep learning about performance using a concept map:

Individuals, groups, and organizations can benefit by taking a systematic approach to reflection designed to generate key insights and action implications to enhance future performance. We know that 2LTs Russell and Wagner are familiar with the After Action Review (AAR) process taught and practiced by the US military. AARs are consistently done to enhance unit performance based on real time feedback. However, the AAR process is also a potent tool to use for improving *individual* performance. By honestly answering these six AAR questions while focusing on their own performances, one might expect both 2LTs Russell and Wagner to develop improvement strategies.

These six questions are:
1. What was I trying to do?
2. What happened?

3. Why did it happen?
4. What should be sustained?
5. What should be changed?
6. What did I learn from going through this process?

Here is how Jeff Russell might answer these questions:
   1. What was I trying to do?
      - Prove that I am a capable troop manager/leader
      - Advance up the military hierarchy
      - Help my unit succeed

   2. What happened?
      - Consistently received feedback from Thompson that I am deficient in managerial functions like planning, and organizing, and in managing performance towards a vision.
      - Received same feedback after NTC exercise

   3. Why did it happen?
      - Perhaps not receiving adequate support to overcome my weaknesses
      - Feeling I am who I am and do not need to change
      - Belief that Thompson is focusing on minutia

   4. What should be sustained?
      - Leading from the front
      - Being a role model for my men in terms of leadership behavior and physical fitness

   5. What should be changed?
      - Talk to Walker and explore what I can learn from him
      - Ask Thompson for help in making contact with peers in the troop who have overcome similar weaknesses in management similar to ones I have in order to learn how to change/improve
      - Get some tips from my Master Sergeant on how to manage better

   6. New learning?
      - Encourage my troops to use AARs for personal improvement
      - Develop a personal development plan with specific hard goals and track my performance over time
      - Take a hard look at my performance and ask whether I can change, whether I want to change, and what needs to take place for me to make progress in improving my management skills

This same process might be followed for 2LT Walker

It is important note that in a non-military setting, being deficient in management skills or leadership skills would not be a career-ending occasion since civilian managers are many times able to shift an employee to their areas of strength and complement their observed weaknesses with other personnel.

Reframing Organizations – Bolman and Deal (2013) – Ch. 16 – frames

Bolman and Deal (2013) posit that there are at least four different ways of viewing the world: Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic. If we view the world from a certain perspective and it is not working, it behooves us to look for a different approach. Although the book as a whole explores different applications and support for the four frames, their embodiment is most clear and succinct in the descriptions from chapter 16, summarized below in Table TN-2.

Table TN-2: Roles and Foci of the Bolman and Deal (2013) Four Frames.

Frame	Fundamental Role	Focus
Structural (p. 325)	Clarifying goals, structuring environment, defining roles and relationships, establishing policies and lines of authority	Task, fact, logic in the belief that structural flaws are greater liabilities than personal limitations
Human Resource (p. 327)	Support and empowerment through participation and inclusion	People, loyalty, commitment
Political (p. 329)	Recognize political reality, find common ground, and deal with conflict	Tie together major constituencies and manage conflict
Symbolic (p. 331)	Inspire people and build traditions	Organizational history and culture

(Boleman and Deal, 2013)

2LT Russell is singularly focused on the symbolic frame, which seems to fit well with our idealized version of what an Army leader should be. However, to do a better job in the eyes of CPT Thompson, Russell might do his homework and shift his focus from being an individual contributor to one whose success is defined by the performance of his unit in his presence or absence. Russell needs to focus on strengthening his structural approach by better planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling, and problem-solving, all key management functions identified by Kotter (1990). Perhaps partnering with Walker on developing better administrative skills and also with his platoon sergeant might provide a fruitful avenue for improved performance.

Walker's dilemma seems to be caused by an excessive focus on the structural approach, with a deficiency in at least the symbolic frame. He needs to spend time on learning how to inspire people and build traditions through organizational history and shared culture. The symbolic frame is very similar to Kotter's (1990) description of leadership behaviors. Along these lines, Walker might better establish direction, align people by communicating direction by words and deeds, and energize people to overcome major bureaucratic and resource barriers to change. Perhaps partnering with Russell on developing better leadership skills as well as with his platoon sergeant could lead the way to performing at a level more satisfactory to CPT Thompson.

Scholtes (1998)– the Leader's Handbook - Systems Thinking
Extending Deming's concepts, Scholtes (1998) argues that the system, not individual skills, determines how people perform. This approach is highly congruent with the focus of Schemerhorn, et al. (1990) on the importance of managerial empathy and support to enhancing individual performance.

- Following this logic, students could hypothesize that the selection system is flawed or the training is suboptimal. For example, selecting the most physically fit candidates such as Russell for platoon leaders might not yield the best cadre of leaders. CPT Thompson's selection of Wagner, who had no prior military experience before ROTC, is also questionable. Wagner simply might not have been ready to take on the demands of a platoon leader's role.
- The most plausible systems argument based on case insights questions CPT Thompson's officer professional development program. It is apparent that the platoon leaders are supportive of it and motivated by advancing their careers. Why, one might ask, has it not been effective after six or more months? A poor developmental training program could explain the lieutenants' struggles from a systems perspective.
- This hypothesis of poor training as a contributor to the performance problems of the two LTs is supported by Deming's (cited in Gartner & Naughton, 2104) idea of common cause vs. special cause variation. Common cause variation is built into the system and is the result of many influences, some of which will never be known. Most variation such as the problems, mistakes, and rework we experience on a daily basis is common cause variation, built right into the system. Special cause variation is a unique event that is attributable to some knowable influence. More than 95 percent of variation in a system is a result of common causes (Scholtes, 1998). These common causes are present all the time and cannot be eliminated unless a major overhaul of the *system* takes place. Leaders too often treat common cause variation as special cause, trying to change employee behavior. Managing common cause variation instead requires improvements to the process.

Motivation – Expectancy Theory
Expectancy theory states that motivation to work is the product of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence (Osland, Kolb, Rubin, & Turner, 2006).

- Particularly in Wagner's case, it is possible that he does not have the ability needed to form the link between effort-performance (expectancy). This might be deduced from the fact that Russell has six more years of relevant, job-specific experience than Wagner.
- The case points to potential issues with the performance-outcome linkage (instrumentality) for both platoon leaders. Their expectations are that they will participate in the program to improve their weaknesses and advance their careers. Russell and Wagner have been actively participating in CPT Thompson's developmental program for six months. The critical incident illuminates that they are making little progress, and this could be a demotivating force given the time invested.
- Similarly, in terms of rewards, the 2LTs are extrinsically motivated by the prospects of advancing their careers. However, CPT Thompson has only come to them with feedback pointing out their deficiencies, which could be lowering the perceived valence of this extrinsic reward.

Goldsmith (2007) Three habits that hold leaders back and how to overcome them.
Goldsmith (2007) argues that "exalting our vices as virtues" (p. 2) is a common fault for leaders. Students can brainstorm on vices of Russell and Wagner.

- Russell's difficulty with performing administrative tasks could spring from an excessive craving for combat. His extensive military experience and passion for training his junior leaders in combat techniques are telling indicators of this insight. By his nature, as a very competitive and passionate person, he might not put much effort into becoming more adept with administrative duties.
- Chances are Wagner also has excessive need to be "me," as Goldsmith (2007) put it. We characterize Wagner as a thinker—he thinks so much that when it comes time to take action, he freezes up. Students can formulate this insight by picking up the subtle details of his engineering background, the fact that he is highly intelligent, and his outstanding pre-mission planning. However, his overly analytical nature can also be his Achilles heel: "When it came to the execution of a mission, 2LT Wagner struggled to take charge and provide clear and confident instruction."

The STARS model (Watkins, 2004) from the *First 90 Days* Applied to the Leadership Style of Captain Thompson
According to the STARS Model™ (Watkins, 2004), different styles of management/leadership are appropriate depending on the stage of the organization's evolution. Turnaround strategies, for example, tend to require a more hands-on approach.

- The case notes that CPT Thompson has been extremely successful in climbing the ranks and turning around the struggling unit. But, as his unit has progressed from the turnaround phase to the sustained success which his superior wants him to take to the next level, his hands-on leadership style has not changed.
- In the case, he does not praise the 2LTs or provide them with the autonomy needed to elevate their self-confidence in their underperforming areas. It seems that CPT Thompson still engages in behavior more conducive to winning himself rather than making his lower-ranking lieutenants winners. Goldsmith (2007) believes this type of behavior is another habit holding leaders back and limiting their employees' potential. Being "involved in every aspect of unit preparedness" may give him maximum input, but at the same time can diminish the commitment of his platoon leaders.
- Just as important, students should realize that CPT Thompson's hands-on leadership style may be misaligned with his expectations for Russell and Wagner to be the owners of what their units do or fail to do.

The purpose of depicting linkages from seven different concept sources is to demonstrate the power of concept mapping as an analytical tool. Students in reality might be expected to develop three or four concept sources on each side of the problem statements when these are used in examinations.

3. How effective has CPT Thompson been as a coach to Russell and Wagner, and what have the results been? (LO 1)

Expectations and Contributions

Clawson (2012) considers clarifying one's own view of what subordinates can do as a major leadership challenge. It is difficult to garner commitment and coach effectively unless the leader knows how the subordinates can contribute to the mission. The military practices outcome-based training and evaluations in developing junior leaders. CPT Thompson would be more effective as a coach to Russell and Wagner if he clearly stated his intent and allowed the lieutenants to work to meet that intent; in other words, if Thompson focused on managing the *what,* not the *how*.

A platoon leader's job description, while simple, can be daunting for a newly commissioned second lieutenant. It is the responsibility of the commander (i.e., the coach) to mentor the junior leaders in taking on the responsibility of leading soldiers while remaining actively engaged. In the end, the company commander must ensure the company accomplishes its mission. CPT Thompson's statement that the lieutenants are responsible for everything the platoon does or fails to do could be intimidating to some. Although Thompson attempted to create a mentoring environment through his professional development program, it became clear at NTC that this was not effective.

The Leader Role

Leaders have the responsibility for creating the conditions to allow motivation to flourish in their organization. Recommended actions by Osland et al. (2006) include: (a) creating the right vision, (b) ensuring employees are placed in the right jobs, (c) setting challenging, specific goals, (d) monitoring and rewarding performance, (e) proactively managing low performers, and (f) creating a culture that values employees and performance.

While both platoons successfully completed their missions, CPT Thompson did not create conditions that encouraged his lieutenants to perform at expected levels. While he displayed genuine concern about the careers of the lieutenants and wanted them to succeed, his goals were insufficient to proactively manage subordinate performance. Using this one event as a final evaluation without intermittent evaluations was unfair to the platoon leaders. It would have been better for CPT Thompson to address the lieutenants' leadership flaws prior to their NTC rotation.

The Level 5 Hierarchy (Collins, 2001)

Collins (2001) proposed a five-tier hierarchy describing increasing levels of leadership competency as summarized below.

Table TN-3: Summary of Collins' (2001) Level 5 Hierarchy

Collins (2001) Level	Title	Attributes
1	Highly capable individual	Talent, knowledge, skills
2	Contributing team member	Works well in group setting
3	Competent manager	Effective organizational abilities
4	Effective leader	Compelling vision and high standards

| 5 | Executive | Blends character and indomitable will |

<div align="right">(Collins, 2001)</div>

Following the Collins (2001) hierarchy, CPT Thompson would fall under Level 3: competent manager. At this level, the leader organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of professional objectives (Collins, 2001). Because the company has been effective in meeting goals and expectations, CPT Thompson demonstrates the capacity to organize his subordinates in a way that the company can perform to standard. However, he is not maximizing his subordinates' potential. In order to reach a higher level in Collins (2001) schema, Thompson would need to motivate his lieutenants as well as organize them.

4. **Which of CPT Thompson's three options would be best? Why? Integrate your ideas from questions 1-3 to evaluate the three courses of action. (LO 2)**

CPT Thompson's decision about the leadership of the company has an immediate impact on both the career development of his lieutenants and the potential for a successful deployment to Afghanistan. He can retain the current leadership structure, replace the lieutenants with others from outside the organization, or reorganize the company internally and swap the two platoon leaders to maximize their strengths.

Clawson (2012) recommends analyzing managerial competency based on underlying values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations (VABEs). If CPT Thompson chooses to keep the organizational structure as is and increase the number of professional development sessions, he is empowering his lieutenants and allowing them to take control of both their platoons and their careers. This requires the most effort in that Thompson needs to be more intimately involved in coaching and developing his lieutenants' leadership skills. He needs to delve deeply to identify their most important VABEs while shaping or coaching to ensure that these are congruent with the VABEs of the organization. CPT Thompson needs to set specific hard goals for which the platoon leaders can strive. This option will challenge Thompson to understand the strengths and weaknesses of his lieutenants and determine the values each can add to the company.

Replacing the lieutenants and reassigning them elsewhere in the brigade will not only hinder their respective career progressions, but could also create a culture of resentment within the company. Especially after a rotation at NTC that is focused on team building, the platoons may view the decision to replace the lieutenants as a reflection of their overall performance. Furthermore, CPT Thompson would be challenged to find suitable replacements as well as the time to integrate them into the company. The culture of the company could be damaged and the unit might go into the deployment with a sense of uncertainty.

Reorganizing the leadership of the two platoons would send a message to the lieutenants that, while they are still trusted, the commander may have lost faith that they can execute their jobs in their current positions. Similar to removing the lieutenants completely, there would be a sense among the platoons that the soldiers failed their platoon leader. Furthermore, retaining them in the unit, albeit in another position, would increase and retain the tension within the company as a whole.

CPT Thompson should make the decision to retain the current leadership structure and increase his involvement in the mentorship of the lieutenants. He needs to identify and communicate to them their strengths and weaknesses. He then needs to set clear expectations and create conditions to allow the lieutenants to take ownership of their platoons. This would also be a reinforcement of the trust that CPT Thompson has for his platoon leaders.
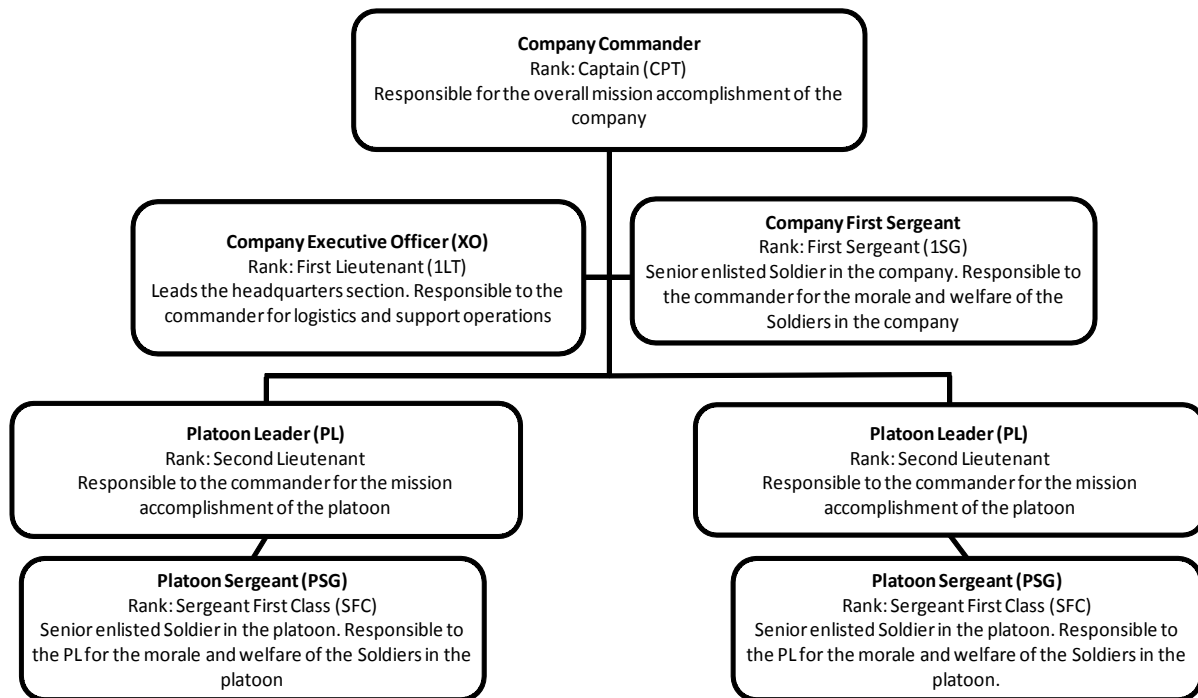
Other Pedagogical Materials

Students not acquainted with military practices may benefit from further explanation. The following is from Snook, Schneider, and Kaderavek (2004).

Rank Structure and Unit Divisions

> The Army is a hierarchical organization with two distinct career paths—enlisted and officer. Enlisted soldiers enter the Army as privates and attend basic training, where they are indoctrinated into the military lifestyle and values. After successfully completing several years of service, they attain the rank of sergeant and become non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Promotion to sergeant symbolizes a soldier's commitment to the profession of arms and recognizes his or her status as an Army leader. As the Army's first-line supervisors, NCOs are primarily responsible for "taking care" of their soldiers and their soldiers' families and for managing training for individual tasks.

> Officers are commissioned into the Army as second lieutenants through one of three sources: [The U.S. Military Academy at] West Point, Reserve Officer Training at a participating university, or Officer Candidate School. Officers are senior leaders responsible for tactical strategy, collective training tasks, long-range training plans, and resource management. A select group of officers is chosen to command units. Commanders accept full responsibility for their assigned troops and equipment. Levels of command include platoon (2nd lieutenant), troop or company (captain), squadron or battalion (lieutenant colonel), regiment or brigade (colonel), division (major general – two stars), corps (lieutenant general – three stars), and army (general – four stars). In the Army, commanders are responsible for "everything their units do or *fail* to do." (pp. 2-3)

FigureTN-3: Combat Support Company Leadership in CI

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │          Company Commander          │
                    │         Rank: Captain (CPT)         │
                    │ Responsible for the overall mission │
                    │   accomplishment of the company     │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────┬──────────────────────────────┐
┌───────────────────────────┐  ┌───────────────────────────────┐
│ Company Executive Officer  │  │   Company First Sergeant      │
│          (XO)              │  │  Rank: First Sergeant (1SG)   │
│ Rank: First Lieutenant     │  │ Senior enlisted Soldier in    │
│        (1LT)               │  │ the company. Responsible to   │
│ Leads the headquarters     │  │ the commander for the morale  │
│ section. Responsible to    │  │ and welfare of the Soldiers   │
│ the commander for          │  │ in the company                │
│ logistics and support      │  └───────────────────────────────┘
│ operations                 │
└───────────────────────────┘
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Company Commander
Rank: Captain (CPT)
Responsible for the overall mission accomplishment of the company

Company Executive Officer (XO)
Rank: First Lieutenant (1LT)
Leads the headquarters section. Responsible to the commander for logistics and support operations

Company First Sergeant
Rank: First Sergeant (1SG)
Senior enlisted Soldier in the company. Responsible to the commander for the morale and welfare of the Soldiers in the company

Platoon Leader (PL)
Rank: Second Lieutenant
Responsible to the commander for the mission accomplishment of the platoon

Platoon Leader (PL)
Rank: Second Lieutenant
Responsible to the commander for the mission accomplishment of the platoon

Platoon Sergeant (PSG)
Rank: Sergeant First Class (SFC)
Senior enlisted Soldier in the platoon. Responsible to the PL for the morale and welfare of the Soldiers in the platoon

Platoon Sergeant (PSG)
Rank: Sergeant First Class (SFC)
Senior enlisted Soldier in the platoon. Responsible to the PL for the morale and welfare of the Soldiers in the platoon.

Epilogue

CPT Thompson knew that relieving his lieutenants from command and reassigning them elsewhere in the brigade would have a lasting, negative impact on their careers. For this reason, he kept his lieutenants in their leadership positions and developed a more personal relationship with them in order to identify and remedy the underlying reasons behind their leadership deficiencies.

CPT Thompson scheduled one-on-one meetings with the platoon leaders after work hours where he was able to connect with them on a more personal level. He also coordinated lunches with the platoon sergeants to let them in on the development of the lieutenants. He was able to convince the platoon sergeants to tailor their involvement in the platoon in such a way to force the lieutenants to focus on their specific areas of weakness. These lunch meetings proved to be the most effective method of developing the leadership abilities of the lieutenants.

CPT Thompson saw a vast improvement in the performance of the lieutenants and was confident that they would perform well on the deployment. The unit deployed to Afghanistan and was sent home after nine months because of the drawdown of forces. The company performed well and the brigade commander was very satisfied with their performance. Once home, 2LT Russell was promoted to first lieutenant and assigned as the executive officer. CPT Thompson was promoted to major and assigned a staff job in the brigade. The lieutenants continued to develop as leaders and are excelling in their careers.

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