



# ACQUISITION LEADERSHIP: AN OPPORTUNITY LOST FOR ACQUISITION EXCELLENCE?

 **Michael J. Kotzian**

The Defense Acquisition Management System (DAMS) has continued to be questioned in terms of delivering cost-effective and timely complex weapon systems that meet warfighter requirements. As a means to improve this ongoing dilemma, this article posits that increased attention across the acquisition community should be paid, not to improved processes and procedures, but to leadership. The importance of leadership competency is reviewed from the perspective of the Services' Professional Military Education institutions. As the organization responsible for training the Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Workforce on the complexities of the DAMS, the Defense Acquisition University is called upon to improve its entry- and mid-level course offerings associated with acquisition by providing meaningful instruction regarding foundations of leadership competency.

**Keywords:** *Transformational Leadership; Transactional Leadership; Organizational Success; Defense Acquisition Management System (DAMS); Culture; Professional Military Education (PME); Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L) Workforce*

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# The foundation of Leadership

*No problem can be solved from the same  
consciousness that created it; we must learn to see  
the world anew.*

*Albert Einstein*



The general consensus of the Department of Defense (DoD) community of acquisition practitioners appears to indicate that the weapons systems acquisition process is broken and needs to change.

In March 2009, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued its most recent annual assessment of DoD Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAPs) for 2008 by concluding that, of the 96 MDAPs assessed, “total research and development costs are now 42 percent higher than originally estimated, and the average delay in delivering initial capabilities is now 22 months. In addition, 42 percent of the programs reported a 25 percent or more increase in acquisition unit costs” (GAO, 2009, p. 6). Shortly thereafter, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates held a news conference in April 2009 where he announced major changes to the fiscal year 2010 defense budget, stating DoD needed to “reform how and what we buy; meaning a fundamental overhaul of our approach to procurement, acquisition, and contracting” (DefenseLink, 2009). This was quickly followed by a June 2009 editorial from Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn III who wrote, “For the first time in decades, the political and economic stars are aligned for a fundamental overhaul to the way the Pentagon does business” (Lynn, 2009). Most recently, in July 2009 the Business Executives for National Security (BENS) Task Force issued a report that identified end-to-end problems with the acquisition system, including “requirements creep, funding instability, poor cost estimating, immature technology, and the lack of flexibility to solve problems. These are compounded by the fact that many individuals with little or no accountability can profoundly impact funding, schedule, personnel assignments, and administrative demands” (BENS, 2009, p. 6).

So what’s to be done to ensure that the warfighter receives the most capable weapons systems that meet the requirements, while being delivered on time and at the estimated cost? Regrettably, the vast majority of acquisition reform approaches will focus on adjustments to the processes and procedures that guide the DAMS. As an example, when the guiding document governing the *Defense Acquisition Management System (DAMS)*—DoD Instruction 5000.02, *Operation of the Defense Acquisition System*—was recently updated and released in December 2008 after months of anticipation, the result was a 110 percent increase in content from the previous version (Brown, 2009). This was accompanied by an increase in regulatory and statutory documentation requirements in support of all major milestone events.

The alteration of such a foundational policy should be viewed as an organizational change. From a DoD perspective, the introduction of increasingly complex and altering business policies and procedures can only be viewed as a change that impacts those who are charged with implementing such policy and procedures through enactment of the DAMS—members of the *Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L) Workforce*.

According to Linstone and Mitroff (1994), three factors merit consideration when implementing change: technical, organizational, and personal perspectives. Research dealing with organizational change unfortunately “has mainly focused on organizational factors” while “neglecting the person-oriented issues” (Vakola, Tsausis, & Nikolaou, 2004, p. 88). While people are the most important factor in implementing change, they also represent the most difficult factor with which to effect change (Linstone & Mitroff, 1994). For any organizational change to be effective, challenging the beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes of the workforce is critical, as the most influential leverage point for meaningful change resides within the human system (Juechter, Caroline, & Alford, 1998).

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### WHY IS THERE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE?

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Any substantive change to organizational processes will be viewed by some personnel as upsetting and by others as cataclysmic, which can lead to workforce resistance in accepting the change. Why is there resistance to change? A growing body of academic literature suggests “organizational change places demands not only on the organization, but also on the individual employees, both physically and psychologically” (Cole, Harris, & Bernerth, 2006, p. 353). Employees are now being asked to adapt to change without disruption; however, resistance to change is the more common reaction (Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004). Resistance occurs because it threatens the status quo (Beer, 1980; Hannan & Freeman, 1984; Spector, 1989) or increases fear and the anxiety of real or imagined consequences (Morris & Raben, 1995; Smith & Berg, 1987), including confidence in the ability to perform (Morris & Raben, 1995; O’Toole, 1995).

In a previous *Defense Acquisition Review Journal* article, the author posited that leadership and *culture* were critical factors when it came to the retention of DoD’s AT&L Workforce (Kotzian, 2009). This article will continue one of the threads associated with the author’s earlier article in terms of pursuing acquisition excellence: The importance of leadership—posited as the key attribute required within DoD’s acquisition community—is paramount if the AT&L Workforce is going to overcome the resistance to policy change and begin to approach, in some appreciable measure, the expectations of taxpayers, the Congress, and most importantly, warfighters. Succinctly, the production of effective weapons systems delivered in a timely manner at a reasonable cost will constitute acquisition excellence and all it embodies.

## Purpose

Many scholars believe that leadership is one of the most important factors—if not *the* most important—that an organization must possess in order to be successful in today’s global environment. Unfortunately, most of the readings about organizations over the last half-century have focused on management. The management techniques to be used in the 21st century are expected to be very similar to those used by management in the 20th century. In fact, “similar management problems have existed as long as human societies have existed” (Hofstede, 1999, p. 35). The problem is that this process has succeeded in developing “generations of executives who know much more about management than they do about leadership” (Kotter, 1998, p. 5). In the absence of effective leadership, “the probability that a firm can achieve superior or even satisfactory performance when confronting the challenges of the global economy will be greatly reduced” (Hitt & Ireland, 1999, p. 43). Clearly, a current and future imperative for DoD is to produce as many workforce members as possible who know something about leadership because “people who are just managers will never produce the cultures necessary to adapt to a rapidly changing 21st century” (Kotter, 1998, p. 5). The clear observation is that organizations “will rise and fall based on the quality of their leadership,” and this will be more true in the 21st century as organizations “struggle with their missions, identities, and strategies” (Zahra, 1999, pp. 39–40).

When it comes to *organizational success*, the academic literature is repetitive and unequivocal in its advocacy of leadership as a key factor. Definitions of leadership abound as do academicians who have studied leadership, but the typical gist is that leadership “involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (Yukl, 1998, p. 3).

Through the years, many different leadership styles have been put forth and studied, e.g., Total Quality Management or TQM, which emerged as the dominant management style during the 1980s through 1990s. The scientific study of leadership can be roughly divided into three periods: (1) trait theory, a premise that presupposes leaders are somehow different from those who remain followers; (2) behavior theory, which tries to search out behavioral characteristics of supposed great leaders and subsequently identifies three styles on a continuum from autocratic to democratic to *laissez-faire*; and (3) contingency theory, which suggests that the success of any leader depends upon applying the proper methodologies based on the situation (Chemers, 1995). However, within recent academic literature, one of the more common themes associated with organizational success is that of *transformational leadership* in lieu of *transactional leadership* (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008; Randall & Coakley, 2006). Transactional leadership relies on a contractual exchange of rewards for efforts dependent on positive and



and strategic) and links the educational levels so each builds upon the knowledge and values gained in previous levels (CJCS, 2009, p. A-A-1).

In addition, the CJSCI framework also recognizes both the distinctiveness and interdependence of Joint and Service schools in officer education. Service schools, in keeping with their role of developing Service specialists, place emphasis on education primarily from a Service perspective in accordance with joint learning areas and objectives (CJCS, 2009, p. A-A-1).

Leadership training is conducted through the PME institutions of each individual Service (Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps), where future leaders “spend their formative years in a single Service culture that shapes their attitudes, values, and beliefs about what constitutes ‘good’ and ‘bad’ leadership styles” (English, 2002, p. 2). Such training is ultimately focused on mission accomplishment in terms of conducting successful combat operations. The crucial role for PME is to “help future officers understand how the world is changing and to enable them to determine how the military must change to fit this new world” (Kenney, 1996, p. 53). The PME system, according to Kenney, is uniquely suited to the vital task of preparing future military leaders not simply to operate, but to thrive in such an environment, to adapt to rapidly changing conditions, and to reorient their thoughts and actions in real time to contingencies that may not be what they seem (Kenney, 1996, p. 53).

Alternatively, the mission for educating DoD’s AT&L Workforce—those members responsible for enacting the DAMS—primarily falls to the Defense Acquisition University (DAU). This responsibility is embedded in DAU’s mission statement: “Provide practitioner training, career management, and services to enable the acquisition, technology, and logistics (AT&L) community to make smart business decisions and deliver timely and affordable capabilities to the warfighter” (DAU, 2008, p. 1). DAU will perform this practitioner training through one or more pillars comprising the AT&L Performance Learning Model (PLM): training, continuous learning, mission assistance, and knowledge sharing (DAU, n.d.).

In terms of training the AT&L Workforce, it can be argued that all PLM pillars provide opportunities to enhance learning about the DAMS. For example, DAU supported awareness about the revised DoD Instruction 5000.02 through rapid-deployment events where DAU went directly to their customer base to foster an understanding of the changes and impacts associated with the new policy guidance. However, most of DAU’s mission interface with the AT&L Workforce in terms of sheer numbers is accomplished through DAU training courses offered in response to enactment of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), which was initially signed into law in 1990.

DAWIA identifies—by career field and certification level—the education, training, and experience requirements DoD AT&L Workforce members must achieve to progress over time within DoD (DAU, 2008). DAU identifies

the type of assignment, core certification standards, and unique training positions required by AT&L Workforce members for each of 15 different career fields leading to Level I, Level II, and Level III certification. In addition, “core plus” development guidance is provided for those AT&L Workforce members seeking additional guidance/knowledge beyond the level certification standards (DAU, 2010).

As alluded to at the start of this article, the remarks from DoD’s senior leadership and recent independent studies signify that DoD is undergoing a significant change in corporate worldview as the organization transitions from an industrial-age military to an information technology-age military, where the most important changes are projected to be organizational and doctrinal (Davis, Gompert, Hillestad, & Johnson, 1998). As a systematically entrenched organization, fundamental changes in the DoD’s structure—indeed, the organization’s very way of “doing business”—will prove a daunting task.

The rationale for the research undertaken is that, by any standard, DoD is truly a world-wide enterprise spending billions of dollars on the procurement of major weapons systems intended to support the warfighter. To accomplish this task in a cost-effective and timely manner, DoD needs to ensure that all AT&L Workforce members responsible for transition are properly prepared to do so. This article posits that one of the critical attributes all AT&L Workforce members need—to carry out this tasking—is continued training, incorporating the concept of leadership. Further, such leadership training should be offered as early as possible to members of the AT&L Workforce who are seeking DAWIA career field certification through DAU.

Therefore, the purpose of this research article is to examine the following research question: As the DoD organization responsible for educating the AT&L Workforce on the DAMS, is DAU missing an opportunity to provide leadership training at the entry- and mid-levels to the AT&L Workforce?

## Method

This article’s research question involves the importance of leadership training as part of an AT&L Workforce member’s course of study undertaken during DAWIA certification. To address this question, this article relies upon a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies based on the notion that “qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complementary rather than rival camps” (Jick, 1979, p. 602).

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## **QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

From a quantitative perspective, this article references survey data that were collected in 2008 as part of a study regarding organizational change and subcultures (Kotzian, 2009). The survey population was military and civilian senior leaders, managers, or professionals associated with the DoD—not limited to the AT&L Workforce but thought to be a representative cross-section, applicable in general to the AT&L Workforce. Senior leadership (executive-level) membership was defined as rank structure O-6 and above for military members, and GS-15 (or equivalent) and above for civilian members. Mid-level manager (mid-level) membership was defined as rank structure O-4 and O-5 for military members, and GS-14 and GS-13 (or equivalent) for the civilian members. Professional (entry-level) membership was defined as rank structure O-1 through O-3 and noncommissioned officers for military members, and GS-11 and GS-12 for civilian members.

The survey's sampling frame was comprised of individuals attending one of DoD's PME academic institutions, which was meant to provide a representative cross-section of the three population hierarchies (i.e., senior leaders, management, and professional) from which DoD identifies future leaders, managers, and professionals.

The chosen survey instrument was the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), which is based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF). The CVF was developed by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), which graphically categorized organizational effectiveness into four quadrants, separately labeled to distinguish its most notable characteristics—clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy. The clan culture is named because of its similarity to a family-type organization. The adhocracy culture places a great deal of emphasis on flexibility and external focus. The market culture refers to the type of organization that is mainly focused on external constituencies such as suppliers, customers, contractors, regulators, etc. The hierarchy culture can be viewed as the traditional bureaucracy (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983).

The survey instrument has been academically reviewed and proven for reliability and validity. A pretest of the survey was conducted with some faculty and students at a prominent PME academic institution. Slight word changes were made to some of the survey questions based on pretest feedback to make the survey more DoD-centric. The formal survey instrument was distributed via electronic mail.

The OCAI uses a response scale in which respondents divide 100 possible points among four options across six initial questions. The compilation of A options correlates to the clan culture; the compilation of B options correlates to the adhocracy culture; the compilation of C options correlates to the market culture; and the compilation of D options correlates to the hierarchy culture (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). The summation of points within each quadrant is then plotted to form a four-sided profile

that graphically illustrates the strength of each culture. Respondents answer the six questions two times: initially to provide responses regarding how respondents perceive the organization as it currently is (now) and followed by responses as to how they would like to see the organization in 5 years (preferred). The applicability of the survey to this research article is that one of the questions specifically deals with the topic of leadership.

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### **QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

Attempting to interpret the actions of humans is very much a nonlinear endeavor. Qualitative research is best used to understand the complexities associated with social phenomena (Tucker, Powell, & Meyer, 1995) as it ensures “a commitment to seeing the social world from the point of view of the actor” (Bryman, 1984, p. 77).

As part of the OCAI survey, an open-ended question was placed at the end of the survey tool. Any qualitative responses were completely voluntary on the part of each respondent and could address any aspect that the respondent wished to discuss.

Open-ended questions allow researchers to obtain answers that are unanticipated, may better describe the real views of the respondents, and allow for a response that is phrased in the respondent’s own words (Fowler, 2002). While self-administered open-ended questions may not be comparable across all respondents, the responses can be evaluated for patterns that may repeat over many different respondents to make generalized observations (Salkind, 2003).

In addition, documentation was reviewed for applicability in support of this article’s research question. Somewhat similar to a literature review, this methodology consists of reviewing documentation “composed and released either internally or for public consumption” as well as a means to “confirm or contradict information gathered through other means” (Salkind, 2003, p. 208).

## Results

The results associated with this article consist of four sets. Quantitative results are provided from responses received from the 2008 OCAI survey study. Qualitative results are provided from documentation reviews associated with Service PME curriculum, DAU DAWIA curriculum, and open-ended responses from the 2008 OCAI survey study. All OCAI survey results referenced as part of this article are related to survey questions associated with the survey’s leadership dimension.

### QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

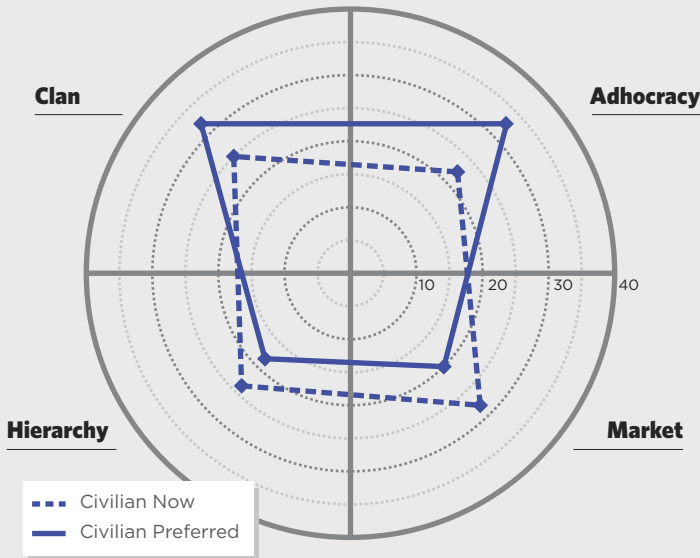
From a quantitative perspective, a total of 1,284 usable OCAI survey results was captured. The OCAI survey results in terms of cultural values (clan, adhocracy, market, hierarchy) provided a comparison between the overall military and civilian culture quadrants in terms of leadership and are summarized in Figures 1, 2, and 3. Figure 1 provides a four-sided plot of the overall military sample population mean averages in terms of perceived importance of the leadership dimension. Figure 2 provides a four-sided plot of the overall civilian sample population mean averages in terms of perceived importance of the leadership dimension. Figure 3 provides a comparison overlay of Figures 1 and 2 to illustrate commonalities and differences between the overall military and civilian sample populations in terms of perceived importance of the leadership dimension.

In terms of the “now” organizational profile data for the leadership dimension, both the military and civilian sample populations view the market leadership style as dominant (mean averages of 28.5 and 27.7, respectively). In addition, both the military and civilian sample populations view the remaining leadership styles in the same order: hierarchy leadership style (25.2 and 26.0, respectively), followed by the clan leadership style (25.1 and 24.1, respectively), and concluding with the adhocracy leadership style (21.2 and 22.3, respectively).

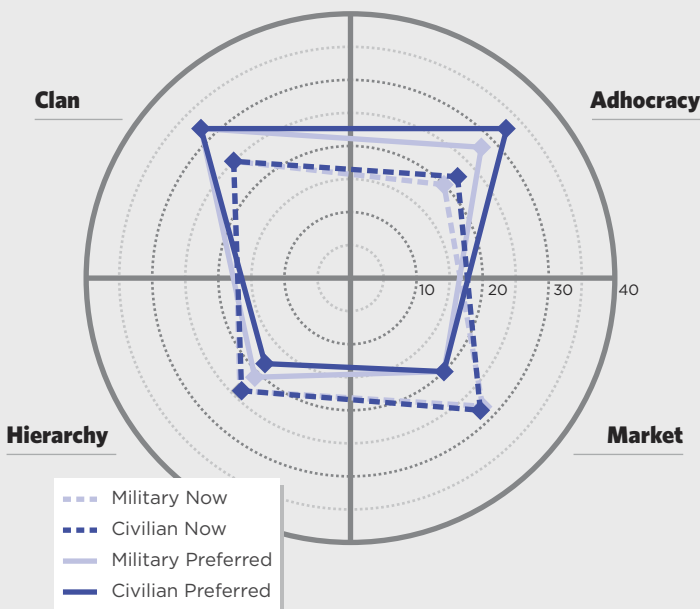
**FIGURE 1. CULTURE PROFILE OF THE OVERALL MILITARY SAMPLE POPULATION**



**FIGURE 2. CULTURE PROFILE OF THE OVERALL CIVILIAN SAMPLE POPULATION**



**FIGURE 3. OVERLAY OF CULTURE PROFILES—OVERALL MILITARY SAMPLE POPULATIONS**



In terms of the “preferred” organizational profile for the leadership dimension, both the military and civilian sample populations view the clan leadership style as dominant (32.7 and 32.4, respectively). In addition, both the military and civilian sample populations view the adhocracy leadership style as the next most desirable (27.3 and 31.1, respectively). The military sample population concludes with the hierarchy (20.4) and market (19.6) leadership styles, respectively. Meanwhile, the civilian sample population reverses that order by preferring the market (19.1) and then hierarchy (17.3) leadership styles, respectively.

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### **QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

To evaluate the role of leadership within the Service PME curriculum, a thorough analysis of available documentation was undertaken. The importance of leadership in the early stages of Service PME curriculum has been a common theme from the historical beginnings of PME. As identified by Holder and Murray (1998), leadership was annotated as a primary focus area of education for the entry-level military officers (p. 85). Figure 4 provides an overview chart of the latest Service PME guidelines (CJCS, 2009, p. A-A-A-1). According to this document, the Chairman’s PME vision “entails ensuring that officers are properly prepared for their leadership roles at every level of activity and employment, and through this, ensure that the U.S. Armed Forces remain capable of defeating today’s threat and tomorrow’s” (CJCS, 2009, p. 1). As early as the precommissioning education level, leadership is one of the foundational focus areas (CJCS, 2009, p. A-A-3).

Leadership development is prevalent within all of the Service PME institutions, which rely on similar “frameworks” used to advocate the importance of leadership. The Navy relies upon their Leadership Competency Model (Department of the Navy, n.d.). The Marine Corps promotes 14 leadership traits (U.S. Marine Corps, n.d.). The Air Force uses Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1 to define three leadership competencies from the tactical through strategic levels (Department of the Air Force, 2006). Similar to the Air Force and Navy, the Army represents leadership at the direct, organizational, and strategic levels with an exhaustive list of competencies (Department of the Army, 2006). The key to all of these frameworks is that leadership is a common thread that appears early within all Service PME institutions.

In addition, each of the Service PME institutions has a department or dedicated course focused on leadership development and training: the Air War College has the Department of Leadership and Ethics (Air War College, n.d.); the Army War College has the Department of Command, Leadership, and Management (Army War College, n.d.); the Naval War College has the College of Operational and Strategic Leadership (U.S. Naval War College, n.d.); and the Marine Corps has dedicated leadership courses as part of its



**FIGURE 4. SERVICE OFFICER PME CONTINUUM**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Cadet/Midshipman</b>	<b>0-1/0-2/0-3</b>	<b>0-4</b>
Education Level	Precommissioning	Primary	Intermediate
<b>Educational institutions and courses</b>	Service Academies ROTC OCS/OTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branch, Warfare, or Staff Specialty Schools</li> <li>• Primary-Level PME Courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Command and Staff College</li> <li>• Army Command and General Staff College</li> <li>• College of Naval Command and Leadership</li> <li>• Marine Corps Command and Leadership College</li> <li>• JFSC; Joint Information and Combatives Warfighting AJPME</li> </ul>
<b>Levels of war emphasized</b>	Conceptual Awareness of all Levels		
			<b>Tactical</b>
<b>Focus of military education</b>	Introduction to Services' Missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigned Branch, Warfare, or Staff Specialty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warfighting in the context of Operational Strategy</li> <li>• Intro to the strategy and security strategy</li> <li>• Develop and demonstrate capabilities and creative the</li> </ul>

*Note.* AJPME=Advanced Joint Professional Military Education (Army); ICAF=Industrial College of the Armed Forces; JFSC=Joint Forces Staff College; OCS=Officer Training School; ROTC=Reserve Officer Training Corps; SJIOAC=Senior Joint Information Operations Academy

	<b>0-5/0-6</b>	<b>0-7/0-8/0-9</b>
	Senior	General/Flag
nd and ge mand and ff School Naval and Staff ps and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air War College</li> <li>• Army War College</li> <li>• College of Naval Warfare</li> <li>• Marine Corps War College</li> <li>• Industrial College of the Armed Forces</li> <li>• National War College</li> <li>• JFSC; Joint and Combined Warfighting School, AJPME</li> <li>• JFSC, Joint Advanced Warfighting School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPSTONE</li> <li>• Joint Functional Component Commander Courses</li> <li>• SJIOAC</li> <li>• Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course</li> <li>• PINNACLE</li> </ul>
		<b>Strategic</b>
	<b>Operational</b>	
g within t of l Art ater d national ategy alytical s and ought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Schools: strategic leadership, national military strategy, and theater strategy</li> <li>• NWC: national security strategy</li> <li>• ICAF: national security strategy, with emphasis on the resource components</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint matters and national security</li> <li>• Interagency process</li> <li>• Multinational operations</li> </ul>

ces; JFSC=Joint Forces Staff College; NWC=Naval War College; OCS=Officer Candidate School; ns Applications Course



Command and Staff College and Marine Corps War College (U.S. Marine Corps, n.d.). As a result, the curriculum for each of these Service PME institutions covers aspects of leadership as a focus area for all students starting at the beginning of any formal Service PME.

Also, as referenced earlier, DoD has an overarching policy governing officer PME intended to identify the “policies, procedures, objectives, and responsibilities for officer *professional military education (PME)* and joint officer professional military education (JPME)” (CJCS, 2009, p. 1). Leadership is prevalent throughout this overarching guidance document from which all Service PME flows.

From the DAWIA perspective, DAU offers acquisition-related training for DoD’s AT&L Workforce. As of 2008, DAU graduated 154,252 students: 118,391 via Web-based training and 35,861 via resident (face-to-face) training—a 300 percent increase since fiscal year 1999 (DAU, 2008, p. 9). For those classes required for AT&L Workforce member Level I, Level II, and Level III certification, 100-level, 200-level, 300-level, and 400-level classes are separated.

DAU’s 2010 catalog lists a total of 95 classes available to the AT&L Workforce in support of acquisition-related certification. Of these classes, only one alludes to leadership: ACQ 450, Leading in the Acquisition Environment. The ACQ 450 course description describes the class as an “action-based learning course” that “provides an overview of the competencies and skills needed to lead in an acquisition environment” (DAU, 2010). Targeted attendees for this class consist of civilians categorized in terms of this article as the mid-level (GS-13 and up) and executive-level (O-5 and above) positions. However, Level III certification is also identified as a course prerequisite, which virtually guarantees that only the most experienced AT&L Workforce members will actually attend this class.

DAU also offers tailored 400-level classes for executive-level AT&L Workforce members, primarily personnel assuming the program manager role and associated responsibilities for a major weapon system program. However, these 400-level classes are structured as “modules” covering various topics of interest to any prospective program manager: earned value management, risk management, acquisition policy and strategy, test and evaluation, contract management, financial management, etc. Ten 400-level courses are offered, but only two have a module with “leadership” in the title: The Executive Program Manager’s Course (EPMC) course (PMT 402) has a module “Leading Change”; and the Executive Refresher Course (ACQ 405) has a module “Leadership and Management Projects.”

DAU’s most popular course across the enterprise, particularly with entry-level AT&L Workforce members, is ACQ 201, Intermediate Systems Acquisition, with an annual enrollment of about 8,000 students (DAU, 2008). In this course, which includes week-long face-to-face class facilitation, only one slide is dedicated to the topic of leadership. In addition, the leadership styles referenced as part of this one-slide teaching tool refer to leadership



take more leadership roles in determining what tasks can be prioritized and accomplished and what can be ignored.”

The failings of DoD leadership were routinely referenced as part of the survey respondents’ feedback, and alluded to an undercurrent of discontent regarding quality of leadership that can be found within DoD. One military mid-level manager wondered “Are these the best leaders we have to do the job?” A civilian mid-level manager noted, “Good mentorship, leadership, and orientation for newcomers is sorely lacking in my organization.” One civilian mid-level manager coined a new term to describe his organizational leadership:

BYOL—Bring Your Own Leadership. Our formal leadership has been routinely bad. In the absence of effective formal leadership, actual leadership has become pretty egalitarian. We are successful because enough reasonable men and women decide that they will somehow succeed—often despite rather than because of—the formal organization.

## Discussion

By virtually any standard, leadership has been identified as a critical attribute to an organization’s success. With DoD increasingly viewed as an organization that needs to be operated from a business perspective, the value-added from exceptional leadership quality in the development of complex weapon systems can only be viewed as an advantage.

The basic premise behind this article is that such value-added leadership should occur as early as possible within the AT&L Workforce. The current paradigm could serve the warfighter or taxpayers in a more efficient manner. If the current paradigm was working at peak efficiency, DoD would not receive the continual waterfall of studies and reports outlining problem areas with the DAMS in terms of cost, schedule, and/or performance.

In analyzing the results collected for this article, there seems to be widespread interest in improving the quality of leadership throughout DoD, including within the AT&L Workforce. The OCAI survey results shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate that both DoD military and civilian personnel indicated a strong preference for a change in leadership style—from the more rigid (market) and bureaucratic (hierarchy) approaches, to approaches that balance family (clan) and risk-taking (adhocracy). The corollary conclusion to be drawn is that the AT&L Workforce is looking for a different leadership approach as compared to what is viewed as the current mode of leadership. With an OCAI survey population including military and civilian members across all rank structures, it would seem a logical extension that the survey results would translate to the AT&L Workforce as

well. So the question becomes, how does the AT&L Workforce gain added expertise in the leadership competency?

This article's data would suggest that the AT&L Workforce would be well served if DAU closely evaluated each Service's PME leadership educational approaches and applied "best practices" to the current acquisition-related curriculum. This conclusion is drawn from the heavy emphasis of the leadership competency at all levels of the Services' PME institutions—not just the senior/executive levels. After centuries of warfare, the military profession has recognized the criticality of quality leadership and justly ensured that this competency is advocated from the very beginning of a warfighter's career. While most of the AT&L Workforce will not see the battlefield during their lifetime, the warfighters, as stakeholders, are nonetheless related to the role played by the AT&L Workforce—delivering the most cost-effective and timely defense weapon systems possible that meet all threshold and as many objective warfighter requirements as possible.

The common thread running through this article's data analysis is that the Service PME institutions highlight the importance of the leadership competency. Meanwhile, DAU—responsible for educating the AT&L Workforce on the functional area roles and responsibilities associated with successfully implementing the DAMS—pays much less attention to the leadership competency in the early stages of DAWIA certification than does the "operational" side of DoD. Yes, at least one DAU course focuses mainly on leadership. And yes, pockets of leadership "modules" are associated with other DAU courses. But all of these points of leadership instruction from within the DAU curriculum are solely focused at the senior/executive level of the AT&L Workforce—exactly the same audience that, when it comes to leadership, possesses the most career experience from which to draw upon.

This approach used by DAU to provide leadership training is a partial solution and a good start. However, instead of concentrating all leadership training assets at the most experienced and senior members of the AT&L Workforce—arguably, AT&L Workforce members who least need leadership training—the workforce would be better served if the DAU approach to leadership training would evolve to one of increasing leadership awareness at the entry- and mid-level segments of the AT&L Workforce. If change is going to occur in stewardship of the DAMS, then those at the "lower levels" need to be fully empowered to initiate changes and enact innovative approaches to better serve the warfighter. Such empowerment and innovation can be enhanced by entry- and mid-level AT&L Workforce members having a better understanding of essential leadership principles.

As noted earlier, advocates of the leadership competency note that DAU's most highly attended course for acquisition professionals—ACQ 201B, Intermediate Systems Acquisition—consists of a single slide discussing leadership qualities. This approach does not adequately express the importance of strong leadership to entry- and mid-level AT&L Workforce members seeking a better understanding of the DAMS. DAU

is rightfully proud of its ability to glean lessons learned from a variety of sources, and then apply those lessons to individual defense acquisition programs as a means of leveraging a “force multiplier” to the procurement of complex weapon systems. DAU now needs to mirror a lessons-learned mind-set from the Services’ PME institutions by supplementing the entry- and mid-level acquisition-related courses offered to the AT&L Workforce with a meaningful discussion about the benefits to be gained from the implementation of proper leadership principles.

## Conclusions

Conducting business with a “status quo” philosophy will not work if meaningful changes are expected in the procurement of complex defense weapon systems. The creativity and innovation contained within the younger members of the AT&L Workforce—the Generation X’ers and Y’ers—offers a generational opportunity that may provide huge dividends in the battle to improve the efficiency of the DAMS. But this opportunity may never reach fruition if the proper leadership training is not incorporated into the entry- and mid-level DAU acquisition courses. The various Service PME institutions have already shown that any improvement to an organization in terms of leadership performance is partially incumbent upon the proper exposure of foundational leadership principles to the up-and-coming generation of future leaders populating the military’s ranks. The same perspective needs to be applied to the AT&L Workforce. That is, if any appreciable change is expected to the structure and implementation of DoD’s DAMS, then DAU needs to significantly enhance its treatment of leadership principles available at all levels of the AT&L Workforce membership. By ignoring the leadership attribute that has been proven to be a significant contributor to any organization’s success, the entry- and mid-level AT&L Workforce members, in trying to enact meaningful change to implementation of the DAMS, are symbolically “working with their hands tied.” DAU stands best positioned to remedy this shortcoming by seriously addressing the importance of leadership.

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**Author Biography**

**Dr. Michael J. Kotzian** is a professor of Program Management at the Defense Acquisition University Mid-Atlantic Region in California, Maryland. His 25-year DoD career encompasses uniformed military and civilian service, including previous assignments in various program manager positions within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Navy. He has two Bachelor of Science degrees (Secondary Education from University of Illinois and Electrical Engineering from Air Force Institute of Technology), a Master of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from University of Dayton, and a Doctor of Management degree from University of Maryland University College. He is Level III certified in program management.

*(E-mail address: Mike.Kotzian@dau.mil)*

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