

COLLABORATIVE COMPETENCIES

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IDENTIFYING COLLABORATIVE COMPETENCIES

ABSTRACT

Increasingly, federal organizations must work together with other organizations to jointly produce public value. Thus, it is important for public employees to develop critical collaborative skills (Bardach, 1998; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004). The National Academy of Public Administration (2002) affirmed this by calling for a focus on collaborative competencies, but the question remained: *what are collaborative competencies?* Many skills are theoretically connected to collaboration, but these links have not been tested empirically. Following the methodology developed by McClelland (1973, 1975, 1976) and furthered by Spencer & Spencer (1993), this article presents the results of a collaborative competency study. This investigation involved the use of matched criterion samples (superior versus average collaborators) from the federal government. Individuals in the criterion samples were interviewed using the Behavioral Event Interview (BEI) design to identify differentiating competencies and create a competency model for future validation.

INTRODUCTION

The National Academy of Public Administration's 2002 report on the evolving role of federal managers illustrated several trends changing the very nature of public sector work, including: increased technical complexity, a shrinking managerial workforce, flatter organizational structures, and demands for improved performance. Scholars such as Kamarck (2003) and Kettl (2005) discussed additional trends that are transforming the nature of governance, including the "blurring of the sectors." These trends illuminate the need for governmental agencies (and thus, the people within them) to collaborate with nonprofit and for-profit organizations to solve "wicked problems" where no single organization has all the necessary resources or answers and the cost of failure is enormous. Similarly, the growth in the "hollow state" as described by such scholars as Milward & Provan (2000) and Light (2006) further illustrates the need for public sector managers to span boundaries to ensure that the ever-growing number of third-party contractors are held accountable for results. Together, these complex trends speak to a changing public sector environment where collaborative action is replacing traditional hierarchical authority for achieving public sector goals and creating public value.

The need for collaborative public management in the federal government is formally recognized in the President's Management Agenda (PMA). One section of the PMA, the Human Capital Scorecard, focuses on the need for public managers to span organizational boundaries in order to "share best practices and learn about new developments." According to a related report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), organizations can encourage collaboration by creating Performance Management Systems (PMS) that identify and reward the competencies related to collaboration (GAO, 2005). However, a very basic, yet crucial question remains: *what*

are collaborative competencies? While the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) indicates that the set of Executive Core Competencies (ECQs) capture essential collaborative skills, this research indicates that there is considerable disagreement between human resource experts and experienced collaborators when it comes to identifying which skills, attributes, and attitudes are collaborative in nature. This disconnect has serious implications. If such a gap persists in an environment where collaboration is critical for performance, the federal government risks recognizing and rewarding behaviors that do not necessarily contribute to the creation of a more collaborative federal workforce.

The topic of collaborative competencies has received considerable interest in recent years. Agencies such as the Department of the Interior set “collaboration skills” as a benchmark for hiring and promotion, although there is considerable disagreement among scholars, human resource practitioners, and those managers who are actually collaborating on what constitutes collaborative ability. Given the centrality of collaboration to this study, a review of the literature revealed that a number of authors have already attempted to identify collaborative competencies. According to Goldsmith & Eggers (2004), managing across boundaries can take time and “requires attitudes and behaviors not commonly developed as part of the typical public manager’s experience,” (p. 165). The authors provide a list of skills necessary for working across boundaries, including: big-picture thinking, coaching, mediation, negotiation, risk analysis, contract management, strategic thinking, interpersonal communications, and teambuilding (p. 158).

Besides the list of competencies identified by Goldsmith & Eggers (2004), Foster-Fishman et al (2001), identify a number of core competencies that members need to bring to a collaborative effort, including: ability to resolve conflict, communication skills, ability to

understand other perspectives, and expertise in the problem area(s). According to Chrislip & Larson (1994), excellent collaborators are those who convene others to solve joint problems, energize around a problem, facilitate the work of others, create vision, and solve problems. Bardach (1998) adds listening skills to the list of competencies needed for effective collaboration (p. 44). Similarly, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management has identified a list of competencies described as critical to “building coalitions” across organizational boundaries. These competencies include partnering, influencing/negotiating, and political savvy. While these lists are insightful, most are anecdotal and some are contradictory. Regardless of the lack of consensus on what constitutes collaborative competencies, one thing is certain: “people with network skills – collaborative skills not currently highly sought nor valued by government – need to be recruited, rewarded, and promoted,” (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004, p. 159).

Following the qualitative methodology developed by McClelland (1973, 1975, 1976) and further illuminated by Spencer & Spencer (1993), this research presents a study designed to distill collaborative competencies. This manuscript focuses on differentiating competencies, or those competencies that distinguish superior performers from average performers (Spencer et al, 1990). This investigation involved the use of criterion samples (superior versus average collaborators) from the U.S. federal government. Individuals in the criterion samples were interviewed using the Behavioral Event Interview (BEI) design. Findings were validated statistically and used to create a competency model to be verified through the use of additional criterion samples in future research.

This study contributes to public management scholarship and practice in several important ways. First, it illustrates the importance of connecting competencies to future needs, or strategic planning. This connection was stressed in a 2003 GAO report, which noted the

importance of determining “the critical skills and competencies that will be needed to achieve current and future programmatic results.” Given the trends driving collaborative public management, it is estimated that collaborative competencies will be in even greater demand in the future. In addition, this study helps to answer the question, “how do we know good performance when we see it?” The empirical verification of collaborative competencies can inform current human resource management practices, including: hiring, training, and developing federal employees who can collaborate effectively. Finally, this study has important scholarly implications. As collaborative governance gains increasing attention in the scholarly literature, identifying those individual behaviors that correspond with collaboration could not be a more pressing task. Such an investigation opens new avenues for future competency-based research.

COMPETENCIES AND THE U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

A focus on competencies has a long history in the U.S. federal government, beginning with the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883. Considered to be the foundational piece of legislation for the creation of a merit system, the Pendleton Act espoused three key principles: open access, political neutrality, and admission based on skills. The Act and its subsequent changes to the federal workforce represented a sea change from the previous methods of selecting public employees. Prior to passage of the Pendleton Act, the placement of federal workers had more to do with comradery than competence. Public employment was considered an entitlement for the winning political party. However, President James Garfield’s assassination by a disgruntled office seeker served as an important catalyst for sweeping reform, which included a new focus on proven skills over political affiliation.

In the intervening years since the passage of the Pendleton Act, the federal focus on competencies developed considerably. In the early 1900s, the federal government was influenced by Frederick Taylor's groundbreaking text, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911). The scientific management movement, also referred to as Taylorism, sought to move assessment beyond rules of thumb and toward concrete measures of efficiency. Taylor's work served as the foundation of for developing standardized tests and measures of competence across the sectors. The scientific development of measures to improve workplace productivity was believed to apply across sectors and thus represent the "one best way" approach to management. The focus, however, was not so much on the qualities of individuals, but on the desired output of efficient production.

The focus on competent production and efficient management transformed during the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt, who believed that key civil service positions should be held by individuals with specialized expertise in policy or management (Ingraham, 1995). As a result, the Federal Service Entrance Examination was created to capture management skill as a core competency. After several (progressively more competitive) iterations of federal entrance exams, major change came via the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.

The Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) established the Senior Executive Service (SES), a senior cadre of executives whose primary expertise was management that could be transferred from organization to organization. It was with the creation of the SES that competencies were prominently considered in the federal government. "Special talent and competencies were to be the identifying hallmark of the SES," (Ingraham & Getha-Taylor, 2005). The original list of executive competencies, which was established in tandem with the creation of the SES, remained

in effect until 1994 at which time the competencies were revised to reflect a changing priority on achieving results. The executive competencies were revised again in 1997 to reflect the need to guide change in the federal government. The most recent revision to the executive core competencies came in 2006, when the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Chief Human Capital Officer Council (CHCOC) identified six of the competencies that they deemed “fundamental competencies” (interpersonal skills, oral and written communication, continual learning, integrity/honesty, public service motivation) that serve as the foundation for the five functional areas: leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, and building coalitions (OPM, 2007). Together, these competencies are known as Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) and are considered central to leadership effectiveness in the federal government (see Table 1).

-TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE-

According to OPM, ECQs “define the competencies needed to build a federal corporate culture that drives for results, serves customers, and *builds successful teams and coalitions within and outside the organization*,” (OPM, 2007, emphasis added). While the Office of Personnel Management contends that the ECQs capture coalition-building, or what may be considered collaborative, skills, this connection is questionable. According to a 1997 interview with the founding scholar on competency research, David McClelland, too often researchers rely on experts to identify competencies of interest. However, there are important reasons not to rely on experts alone. “Doing it that way is much less expensive, but we’ve shown over and over again that experts only identify around 50% of the competencies you uncover in behavioral event interviews. And expert ratings tend to be poor compared to using the interviews to rate people,”

(Adams, 1997). Thus, it is important to interview public managers who are actively engaged in collaboration in order to distill collaborative competencies in an empirically sound fashion.

COMPETENCY STUDIES OVER TIME

The empirical study of competencies originated with David McClelland's pioneering paper in *American Psychologist* in 1973. This paper began a movement that argued that exams and IQ tests, the standards of hiring, were useless in predicting job success. Competencies were identified as another means to predict success in the workplace. The first efforts to identify and develop competencies took place in the U.S. State Department. In the early 1970s, McClelland worked with the Department to identify the characteristics of outstanding Foreign Service Information Officers. The results from this study would be used to select hires with the greatest potential for success. This experiment was the first use of McClelland's Behavioral Event Interview (BEI) technique, which is now considered standard procedure for all competency studies.

The BEI technique allows researchers to identify differentiating competencies, or those competencies that separate outstanding from average performers on a particular behavior of interest. In the case of the U.S. State Department, outstanding officers were compared with average performers, identifying the differentiating characteristics that separated the two groups. The results were used to develop a competency model and a related test to administer to potential hires. While deemed very effective, the approach was short-lived. In a 1997 interview, McClelland voiced his disappointment in the outcome: "No matter how much psychologists say such tests work, people can't see it. The clients thought the test was strange; they preferred to stick to the usual things," (Adams, 1997). However, hiring based on the "usual things,"

including resumes and academic achievements, says Asch (2005), may result in selecting for characteristics that do not necessarily fit the job at hand.

Despite the short-lived use of competency studies in the U.S. Department of State, McClelland's work took hold among organizational psychologists, who have been fine-tuning the method in the 35 years since it was first introduced and implemented. Based on McClelland's groundbreaking work, Boyatzis (1982) compiled a list of 19 competencies common to outstanding managers across sectors (Table 2).

-TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE-

In addition to identifying the competencies shared by effective managers, it was Boyatzis who first coined a definition for the term "competency." A competency, says Boyatzis (1982) is "an underlying characteristic of an individual which is causally related to effective or superior performance in a job." The focus on competencies differs significantly from the traditional approaches to human resource management, which centered on skill-based behaviors. The competency approach expands that focus to include motives, traits, and self-concepts (Tucker & Cofsky, 1994).

According to the Office of Personnel Management, competencies differ from traditional KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities) in important ways. First, competencies focus on future, not just current, needs and performance goals. Second, competencies expand beyond KSAs to include the traits, motives, and behaviors that affect performance. Additionally, competencies can help answer the question, "how do we know good performance when we see it?" Finally, competencies can serve as the foundation for hiring, training, and developing employees. "Competencies can offer [HR practitioners] an opportunity to define excellence," (OPM, 1999, p. 2).

Organizational psychology researchers are not the only ones who have found merit in the McClelland model. Personal interviews with psychologists at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management revealed that McClelland's work remains the gold standard for competency assessment. However, these same interviews revealed that the federal government puts little stock in competency assessment today. One interviewee estimated that 75% of a federal employee's assessment is based on results, while 25% (or often less) is connected to competencies. The potential implications from this trend are significant. For instance, a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2003b) called attention to the important role of competencies in linking individual performance and organizational goals. According to the report, the use of competencies "to provide a fuller assessment of performance," is one of nine key practices that create "line of sight" between employees and the organization. It is this line of sight, says GAO, that can transform organizational cultures in such ways that they are "results-oriented, customer focused, and collaborative in nature." When competencies are overlooked, so is the employee's connection to organizational mission, potentially affecting morale and satisfaction.

Although agencies such as the Government Accountability Office have called attention to the importance of competencies, it does not mean that federal organizations are taking note. For instance, one manager at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) revealed that the organization rarely conducts new competency studies as the focus has shifted to results-oriented assessments. Thus, the understanding of competencies has not kept pace with the changing public sector environment. This trend represents a serious gap in our understanding of how to identify, develop, and reward a more collaborative public workforce. This manuscript seeks to investigate these gaps, using Behavior Event Interview (BEI) data to examine verified

competency clusters that have been linked to collaboration. While human resource managers consider the ECQs to be inclusive of all relevant executive skills, the changing nature of public governance requires a fresh perspective on what may be considered “collaborative competencies.”

DATA AND METHODS

To complete the competency study, I utilized the protocols presented by Spencer & Spencer (1993) in their foundational text, *Competence at Work*. This approach is the same that has been used by human resource management experts at such organizations as the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the Internal Revenue Service (Thompson & Rainey, 2003) to identify competencies that differentiate superior from average performers with regard to a desired behavior. The comparison between superior and average performers refers to “criterion reference,” which is critical to the validity of this study. The full-scale competency study presented here includes all six steps developed by McClelland (1973, 1975, 1976) and furthered by Spencer & Spencer (1993). These steps are presented in Table 3.

-TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE-

According to Spencer & Spencer (1993), superior performers should be selected who are defined “statistically as one standard deviation above average performance, roughly the level achieved by the top 1 person out of 10 in a given working situation.” Therefore, a necessary first step in this process is to determine which criteria will be used to differentiate superior and average performers on the behavior of interest. While there is currently no single federal award to recognize collaborative ability and success, the Presidential Rank Awards do include a measure of an individual’s ability to build coalitions. As the Presidential Rank Awards may only

be conferred on one percent of the Senior Executive Service each year, this award is a fitting metric for superior performance. The sample of superior performers for this part of the study included 20 Presidential Rank Awardees who were interviewed via telephone. In addition, two additional public leaders were added to this sample that had been identified as outstanding collaborators in the federal government. A comparison group included 23 public managers who were selected based on their collaborative experience. These matched groups served as the sample for the collaborative competency analysis.

The personal interviews with these 45 individuals utilized the Behavioral Event Interview (BEI) method, as described by Spencer & Spencer (1993). BEI methodology differs significantly from traditional interviewing methods. Simply asking about an individual's strengths and weaknesses does not adequately reveal differentiating competencies. As noted by Argyris & Schon (1974), subjects' "espoused theories of action," or what they say they do, does not match to their "theories in use," or what they actually do. Thus, as summarized by Spencer & Spencer (1993), "the basic principle of the competency approach is that what people think or say about their motives or skills is not credible. Only what they actually do, in the most critical incidents they have faced, is to be believed," (p. 115). As a result, the BEI methodology asks people to describe how they actually behaved in situations. The five-step methodology, developed by McClelland (1976, 1998) is illustrated in Table 4. According to the BEI protocol, the interview should focus primary on Step #3, Behavioral Events, which should include both major successes and key failures.

-TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE-

Following the interviews, transcripts were thematically coded to inductively identify differentiating competencies from the data. To begin analyzing the interview data, an open

coding approach was used to identify key themes and connections among the interviewees. During this process, some hypothesized collaborative competencies, including extroversion, were removed from consideration due to a lack of empirical evidence. A second round of coding involved an axial coding approach (Strauss, 1987) to code data and emergent themes around twelve dimensions that were theoretically linked to collaborative performance.

This analysis relied on the work of Spencer & Spencer (1993), who advanced the competency movement considerably by publishing a competency dictionary that includes definitions, behavioral indicators, and scale measures for each of Boyatzis' (1982) 19 managerial competencies (see Table 2). Twelve of these competencies have been linked to what can be called “collaborative behaviors” such as cooperation, team building, and relationship building. These competencies serve as the variables of interest in this study and are italicized in Table 2. For each dimension, scores can be attributed to individuals, based on the presence or absence of key behaviors.

The twelve competency dimensions of interest for this study included: Initiative, Information Seeking, Interpersonal Understanding, Organizational Awareness, Relationship Building, Teamwork and Cooperation, Team Leadership, Analytical Thinking, Conceptual Thinking, Organizational Commitment, Self-Confidence, and Flexibility. The associated behaviors and scores for each dimension are detailed in Table 5.

-TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE-

FINDINGS

Individuals in the matched criterion samples were scored using the Spencer & Spencer (1993) competency dictionary. Scores for subjects in the comparison groups were statistically compared using ANOVA and independent sample t-tests to identify competencies that

differentiate average and superior collaborators. To ensure statistical validity, Spencer & Spencer (1993) indicate that study samples should include at least 20 individuals (12 superior and 8 average performers). As this study included nearly twice that number, statistical analysis is an appropriate tool for validation. Based on the statistical analysis, three of the twelve dimensions of interest demonstrated a significant statistical difference between the two groups. Table 6 presents the statistical analysis of the BEI data by competency.

-TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE-

The statistical analysis of the behavioral event interview data reveals that the most significant competencies for collaborative effectiveness are: 1) *Interpersonal Understanding*, 2) *Teamwork and Cooperation*, and 3) *Team Leadership*. These results are significant in that they contrast to what the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) identifies as key competencies for “Building Coalitions.” OPM identifies 1) *Political Savvy*, 2) *Negotiating/Influencing* and 3) *Partnering* as critical to building relationships outside an employee’s organization. OPM’s three “collaborative” competencies match most closely to the 1) *Organizational Awareness*, 2) *Team Leadership*, and 3) *Relationship Building* competencies described in the Spencer & Spencer (1993) competency dictionary.

While there is a shared emphasis on team leadership both in this study and in OPM’s list of Executive Core Qualifications, OPM’s focus on organizational awareness and relationship-building as the primary keys to collaborative success is not supported by these findings. Instead, organizational awareness and relationship-building are trumped by interpersonal understanding and teamwork/cooperation as keys to collaborative effectiveness. These results suggest that there exists a disconnection between human resource managers and superior collaborators with regard to the necessary skills for effective collaboration in the federal government. The potential

implications for this disconnect include ill-fitting selection, succession planning, and reward systems that may in fact select for skills that do not enhance the collaborative capacity of the federal government.

COLLABORATIVE COMPETENCIES MODEL

Based on the statistical findings, an original competency model for collaboration was developed based on the three key statistically significant dimensions of interest. According to Horey & Fallesen (2004), “competency frameworks or models should serve as the roadmap to individual and organizational leader success. The value of competencies is in providing specific or at least sample actions and behaviors that demonstrate what leaders do that makes them successful. Therefore, the end goal of all frameworks or models should be to provide measurable actions and behaviors,” (p. 3). The original theoretical model presented in Table 7 is intended to accomplish those goals by capturing the differentiating behaviors that distinguish average from superior collaborators. This model not only represents causal relationships, but it also allows the opportunity for validation in future studies.

-TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE-

CONCLUSION

This study does not attempt to add additional competencies to the already superhuman list of Executive Core Qualifications offered by the Office of Personnel Management. Rather, it attempts to test whether there is agreement between what human resource managers believe collaborative competencies to be, and what exemplary collaborators demonstrate. The data analysis reveals that there is a disconnection between these two approaches. This finding is significant. First, if there exists disagreement between what human resource managers define as

“collaborative competencies” and what is actually needed to collaborate effectively, we risk rewarding behaviors that do not help create a more collaborative workforce and ignoring those that do.

Second, these findings suggest that the most basic and critical factor to collaboration is interpersonal understanding, which only comes through time and experience. However, as long as the federal personnel management system is structured to assess and reward results, competency development will fall to the wayside. Interpersonal understanding, while proven to be critical to collaborative effectiveness is difficult to assess, and thus, reward. As we move toward diffuse implementation of performance-based pay systems in the federal government that focus on short-term observable results, we may in fact move further away from the goal of enhancing and supporting collaborative governance.

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TABLE 1: Executive Core Qualifications
Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2007

Leading Change	Leading People	Results Driven	Business Acumen	Building Coalitions/ Communications	Fundamental Competencies
Creativity/ Innovation	Conflict Management	Accountability	Financial Management	Partnering	Interpersonal Skills
External Awareness	Leveraging Diversity	Customer Service	Human Capital Management	Political Savvy	Oral Communication
Flexibility	Developing Others	Decisiveness	Technology Management	Influencing/ Negotiating	Continual Learning
Resilience	Team Building	Entrepreneurship			Written Communication
Strategic Thinking		Problem Solving			Integrity/Honesty
Vision		Technical Credibility			Public Service Motivation

TABLE 2: Competency Clusters and Competencies of Interest
Adapted from Boyatzis, 1982

Achievement	Helping/ Service	Influence	Managerial	Cognitive Thinking/ Problem Solving	Personal Effectiveness
Achievement Orientation	<i>Interpersonal Understanding</i>	Impact and Influence	Directiveness	Technical Expertise	Self-Control
Concern for Quality and Order	Customer Service Orientation	<i>Organizational Awareness</i>	<i>Teamwork and Cooperation</i>	<i>Information Seeking</i>	<i>Self-Confidence</i>
<i>Initiative</i>		<i>Relationship Building</i>	Developing Others	<i>Analytical Thinking</i>	<i>Organizational Commitment</i>
			<i>Team Leadership</i>	<i>Conceptual Thinking</i>	<i>Flexibility</i>

TABLE 3: Collaborative Competency Study Methodology

Competency Study Steps (Spencer, McClelland, and Spencer, 1994)	Original Collaborative Competency Study
1. Define performance effectiveness criteria	Superior collaborative ability based on external recognition
2. Identify criterion sample	Superior Performers = Presidential Rank Awardees
3. Collect data	Behavioral Event Interviews Panel (Expert) Data Survey Data
4. Identify competencies	Statistical tests to identify differentiating competencies
5. Validate competency model	Identify ways in which competencies differ for samples via original model for future research
6. Applications	Provide recommendations based on findings for human resource management

TABLE 4: Behavioral Event Interview Steps

	Behavioral Event Interview Methodology	Specific Questions Asked in the Interviews
1.	Introduction and Explanation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The purpose of this interview is to find out what it takes to collaborate, or work well with others across organizational boundaries. The best way to do this is by asking experts like you – the ones who are actually collaborating – how you do it. 2. I would like to learn about the most important collaborative incidents you have encountered on your job. I will ask you to describe: a) a successful collaborative experience and b) a difficult collaborative experience. 3. Everything you say in this interview will be kept strictly confidential.
2.	Job Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please tell me how you got your current job. 2. What are your major tasks or responsibilities? 3. How much of your time is devoted to collaborative activities each week?
3.	Behavioral Events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please recall a specific collaborative experience that went particularly well for you (a high point). I’m interested in learning from the best collaborative experience you’ve had. Please walk me through it from beginning to end. 2. Please recall a collaborative experience in which you felt you weren’t as effective as you could be, when things didn’t go well, or when you were particularly frustrated (a low point). I’m interested in learning from the toughest collaborative experience you’ve had to face. Please walk me through it from beginning to end.
4.	Characteristics Needed to Do the Job	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did you <i>want</i> to do? 2. What did you <i>actually</i> do?
5.	Conclusion and Summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The data from this interview will be transcribed “blind” without your name attached. 2. Do you have any questions? 3. Thank you for your time and insights.

TABLE 5: Competencies Linked to Collaborative Behavior
Source: Spencer & Spencer, 1993

Competency	Scaled Indicators
1. Initiative	Avoids Required Work (-1) Requires Constant Supervision (0) Works Independently (1) Makes Extra Effort (2) Does More than is Required (3) Does Much More Than is Required (4) Makes Extraordinary Efforts (5) Involves Others in Efforts (6)
2. Information Seeking	Does Not Seek Information (0) Asks Questions (1) Personally Investigates (2) Digs Deeper to Identify Root Causes (3) Contacts Others (4) Does Research (5) Uses Ongoing Systems of Investigation (6) Involves Others in Efforts (7)
3. Interpersonal Understanding	Misunderstands Others (-1) Shows No Evidence of Misunderstanding (0) Understands Emotion or Content (1) Understands Emotion and Content (2) Understands Meanings (3) Understands Underlying Issues (4) Understands Complex Underlying Issues (5)
4. Organizational Awareness	Misunderstands Organizational Structure (-1) Ignores/Disdains Organizational Politics (0) Understands Formal Structure (1) Understands Informal Structure (2) Understands Climate and Culture (3) Understands Organizational Politics (4) Understands Underlying Organizational Issues (5) Understands Long-Term Underlying Issues (6)
5. Relationship Building	Avoids Contact (0) Accepts Invitations (1) Makes Work Related Contacts (2) Makes Occasional Informal Contact (3) Builds Rapport (4) Makes Occasional Social Contacts (5) Makes Frequent Social Contacts (6) Makes Home and Family Contacts (7) Makes Close Personal Friendships (8)
6. Teamwork and Cooperation	Uncooperative (-1) Neutral (0) Cooperates (1) Shares Information (2) Expresses Positive Expectations (3) Solicits Input (4) Empowers Others (5) Team-Builds (6) Resolves Conflicts (7)

7. Team Leadership	Refuses or fails to lead (-1) Not Applicable to Job Responsibilities (0) Manages Meetings (1) Informs People (2) Uses Authority Fairly (3) Promotes Team Effectiveness (4) Takes Care of the Group (5) Positions Self as the Leader (6) Communicates a Compelling Vision (7)
8. Analytical Thinking	No Evidence of Analytical Thinking (0) Breaks Down Problems (1) Sees Basic Relationships (2) Sees Multiple Relationships (3) Makes Complex Plans or Analyses (4) Makes Very Complex Plans or Analyses (5) Makes Extremely Complex Plans or Analyses (6)
9. Conceptual Thinking	Uses No Abstract Concepts (0) Uses Basic Rules (1) Recognizes Patterns (2) Applies Complex Concepts (3) Simplifies Complexity (4) Creates New Concepts (5) Creates New Concepts for Complex Issues (6) Creates New Models (7)
10. Organizational Commitment	Disregards Organizational Norms (-1) Makes Minimal Effort to Fit In (0) Active Effort to Fit In (1) Models “Organizational Citizenship Behaviors” (2) Sense of Purpose/States Commitment (3) Makes Personal or Professional Sacrifices (4) Makes Unpopular Decisions (5) Sacrifices Own Unit’s Good for Organization (6)
11. Self-Confidence	Powerless (-1) Avoids Challenges (0) Presents Self Confidently (1) Presents Self Forcefully or Impressively (2) States Confidence in Own Ability (3) Justifies Self-Confident Claims (4) Volunteers for Challenges (5) Puts Self in Extremely Challenging Situations (6)
12. Flexibility	Counterproductively Sticks to Own Opinion/Tactics (-1) Always Follows Procedures (0) Sees Situation Objectively (1) Flexibly Applies Rules or Procedures (2) Adapts Tactics to Situation or Other’s Response (3) Adapts Strategies, Goals, or Projects to Situations (4) Makes Organizational Adaptations (5) Adapts Organizational Strategies (6)

TABLE 6: Statistical Analysis of Competency Strength

Competency	Criterion Group Mean n=22	Comparison Group Mean n=23	Significance: ANOVA	Significance: t-test (Equal Variances Confirmed via Levene's Test)
Initiative	3.82	3.95	.839	-.205
Information Seeking	3.95	3.22	.303	1.04
Interpersonal Understanding	3.21	1.45	.003	3.15**
Organizational Awareness	4.34	4.00	.456	.753
Relationship Building	3.52	2.63	.266	1.12
Teamwork and Cooperation	4.73	3.18	.004	3.07**
Team Leadership	4.21	2.22	.008	2.76**
Analytical Thinking	2.00	1.77	.675	.423
Conceptual Thinking	2.34	2.50	.801	-.253
Organizational Commitment	3.47	3.40	.793	.265
Self-Confidence	2.65	2.77	.826	-.222
Flexibility	1.82	1.72	.873	.161

*Two-tailed probabilities: ** $p < .01$

TABLE 7: Competency Model of Effective Executive Collaborators

Competency	Indicators
1. Interpersonal Understanding: <i>Demonstrates Empathy</i>	(+) Listens to understand other perspectives and needs (+) Develops close relationships with people at all levels (--) Receptiveness to others is dependent on position, rank (--) Unable to understand perspectives outside own expertise
2. Interpersonal Understanding: <i>Understands Motivation</i>	(+) Understands needs for power, affiliation, and achievement (+) Adapts own strategies to motivate others effectively (--) Writes off unproductive collaborative members automatically (--) Seeks sanctions for unproductive collaborative members
3. Teamwork and Cooperation: <i>Inclusive Perspective on Achievements</i>	(+) Inclusive achievement perspective: “we did this” (+) Identifies outcomes that benefit all involved partners (+) Reluctant to claim individual credit for collaborative outcomes (--) Individual achievement perspective: “I did this”
4. Teamwork and Cooperation: <i>Altruistic Perspective on Resource Sharing</i>	(+) Shares resources readily with others: supports altruistic behavior via personal example (+) Balances needs of own organization with needs of others (+) Does not expect return on investment (--) Unwilling to commit resources until others commit first (--) Views resources as organization property, not public goods: protects “turf”
5. Teamwork and Cooperation: <i>Collaborative Conflict Resolution</i>	(+) Welcomes conflict for the purpose of gaining new perspective (+) Seeks win-win solutions to problems (+) Uses boundary-spanning language to find shared meaning (--) Avoids conflict to maintain peace (--) Maintains interest-based positions
6. Team Leadership: <i>Bridges Diversity</i>	(+) Values other perspectives on shared problems (+) Defers to others’ expertise when appropriate (+) Treats others as equals, regardless of rank (--) Skeptical of strangers involved in the same collaborative effort (--) Prior negative relationships affect current collaboration
7. Team Leadership: <i>Creates Line of Sight</i>	(+) Identifies opportunities for collaboration that connect organizational goals with public service goals (+) Connects collaborative effort with noble public sector outcomes (+) Demonstrates enthusiasm in connecting personal effort with larger outcomes (--) Unilaterally creates and communicates collaborative vision