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Goddard, Tim

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J. Tim Goddard

University of Calgary

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J. Tim Goddard, Graduate Division of Educational Research, Faculty of Education,
University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, Albert, Canada T2N 1N4.

Electronic mail may be sent via Internet to goddard@ucalgary.ca

Of daffodils and dog teams: Reflections on leadership

When my grandmother saw the first daffodils of spring bursting through the ground, she knew exactly what to expect. Stately yellow blooms nodding on big green stems, the same in her Yorkshire garden as Wordsworth had observed on the Lake District hills above Ullswater. Now, as I watch the young shoots fight their way through the mud of a Canadian spring, I have to consult my planting guide (Breck's, 2002). Is this a clump of the pure white blooms of the Mount Hood, or the clustered heads of the Avalanche, or the orange-red of the Fortissimo, or the double-pink of the Rosy Clouds ….

As it is with daffodils, so it is with leadership. It seems that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are those who write about the concept. In graduate courses and programs around the world a new generation of aspiring administrators are taught about Theories X, Y, and Z, about 9-9 managerial grids and System 4 organizations, about linking pins and loose coupling … often failing, it seems, to take into account the warnings of Hughes (1994) and others that we "must be skeptical of simplistic models of leadership" (p. 7). In this chapter I do not attempt to provide a single conceptualization of what leadership is, nor do I attempt to develop a scale by which leadership ability might be measured and analyzed. To do so would be to suggest that leadership is a concept which can be pinned down like a butterfly on a board, or bottled like glacial water, and that a single person can, on their own, provide the consumers with such a product.

Introduction

In this paper the focus is on the concept of leadership as it relates to the role of the school-based administrator, head-teacher, or principal. In locating leadership within this

role I ignore those elements that pertain to other decision making functions within education, such as the superintendency (Berg, 1995; Patterson, 1993). Further, the role of the principal is presented within the context of a 'western' education system, specifically one that draws upon the Anglo-Canadian experience. Thus those issues raised by Hallinger and Leithwood (1996), or by Heck (1996), with respect to the observation of leadership outside the western context, are not part of this discussion. Similarly, in this chapter I do not attempt to explore the nuances of application that are related to issues of postcoloniality (Smith, 2001) or race and gender (McGee Banks, 2000). Finally, I take an individual, rather than institutional (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995), perspective and thus ignore those elements related to the sharing of leadership functions (Hajnal, Sackney, Walker, & Shakotko, 1997) or the development of teacher leaders (Hart, 1994).

This is not to say that issues of race, gender, institution, geography, culture, and class, among other ethnocultural variables (Goddard, 1997), ought to be ignored. Such factors form part of the weft and warp of the fabric of leadership. These issues not only constitute the context within which leadership is exercised but are also part of the concept itself. Similarly, the notion of shared leadership is something that ought to be recognized and acknowledged. Indeed, the development of schools as learning organizations, or communities, is predicated on the understanding that leadership is spread throughout the organization (Beck, 1999; Leonard, 1999; Wallace, 2000). A sign on a door does not a leader make. However, for the purposes of the analysis presented here it is useful to restrict the description to within the confines of a single role. Although presented from a singular perspective, it should be understood that the leadership styles presented and discussed here have application outside the principal's office. The role of leadership is

not *contained* within a single individual by virtue of their positional authority; however, the function of leadership is *exercised* by individuals acting within a certain organizational position.

From this dichotomy there emerges an important contradiction. Although Fiedler (1996) regales us with stories of idiosyncratic leaders and cautions us to accept that "leadership does make a difference" (p. 241), for many North American educators the notion of a 'great man' theory of leadership has been placed on the compost heap of history. Conversely, in England and Wales, the Fresh Start approach for "failing" schools has championed the idea of a "Super Head" who can single-handedly redress the situation. In this chapter the focus is not on the individual role incumbent but rather on the leadership styles, or strategies, that might be part of the repertoire of an effective school principal.

In reviewing the literature it is apparent that many different types of leadership have been identified. The administrative equivalents of Dutch botanists are working overtime to develop new varieties for the jaded palettes of those who would analyze the role and function of practitioners who somehow seem to make a difference in the operation of schools. In this article I briefly summarize fourteen different strains of leadership which have been identified; the shelves are so crammed that this is not an exhaustive list, but rather one that is representative of the literature. I then suggest that to adopt any one of these forms of leadership is, in itself, not a means to achieve success as a principal. Rather, it is necessary for the administrator of a school to select from a variety of leadership styles as the situation permits. The metaphor of an Inuit dog-team is used to illustrate how this may be achieved.

Leadership

To define leadership is a task which has caught the imagination of both practitioners and academics over the years. There are those who exhort practitioners not to confuse leadership with status, power, or official authority (Gardner, 1990/2000). Others suggest that leadership can be examined as a function rather than as a role, for a role is essentially located in the person who occupies it, whereas a function can be conceived of and discharged in other ways (N. Bennett, personal communication, August 2001). I tend to view leadership in anthropological terms, drawing upon examples from my experiences working with non-European communities from the western Pacific to northern Canada. In such communities there are rarely formal roles or job descriptions, and yet leaders abound. In my experience, therefore, leading is surely the act of working with a group of individuals to achieve communal goals. As such there need be no official authority in place; people listen to those with the best ideas, not those with the biggest name tag. Any power or status achieved through leadership is fleeting and transient, good only for the current situation and then transferred to someone else who has better ideas about the next challenge. Leadership is functional in that it is only present when it is being exercised. To define leadership in any categorical way has proven both difficult and, perhaps, unnecessary.

The problem arises that once the concept is defined to our own personal satisfaction, we then attempt to teach the concept as though it were learnable (e.g., Smith & Piele, 1997). Herein lies the difficulty. Leadership is not learnable in the sense that one might learn how to boil an egg; once the basic idea of boiling water and leaving the egg in that water for three to five minutes is mastered, one might boil eggs all over the world with a

certain degree of impunity. Unless, of course, one finds oneself high in the Himalaya, where altitudinal differences in air pressure mean that significantly more time is required. I have never been to the Himalaya, but I do know how to boil eggs at lower altitudes and am confident that I would be able to amend my practice, if required, based on knowledge learned from those who have traveled to Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.

Leadership is not so simply learned. In schools, leadership is a concept both multidimensional and multifaceted, where the values, goals, beliefs, and decision-making skills of the principal give purpose and meaning to the policies and procedures which she is duty-bound to implement. These policies and procedures, however, together with the norms of the school context within which they are implemented, are not set by the principal or the school but rather are established and affected by national, provincial, divisional, and local pressure groups.

To respond to this pressurized and unstructured environment requires a multiplicity of skills. Such skills can be conceptualized as ways, or styles, of leading a community of others in an attempt to help achieve the collective goals. In this chapter I argue that the contextuality of leadership is such that the principal must be knowledgeable of, and able to appropriately adopt, a variety of different leadership styles.

The adoption of such an approach, predicated as it is on the tenets of contingency theory, suggests that there is no 'correct' answer or response to any situation. While true, this does not mean that all responses are appropriate. Rather, it is incumbent upon the leader to select the response that is appropriate for that particular situation in that specific time and place, and which is also sensitive to the beliefs and values of all participants to the decision.

This requires the leader to make a "flexible and appropriate adaptation to the immediate situation" (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 130). Such an adaptation is not future focused but rather grounded in "the present, as conditioned by past experience and biological predisposition" (p. 130). Hales (1993), Kelley (2000), and others have stressed the importance of context in influencing the decision-making and learning processes that occur within an organization such as a school.

Here follows a brief description of fourteen such styles, identified from the literature. Such a list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive, merely illustrative. One might argue that situational leadership is the only "true" leadership style, and that all the others are simply examples of this in action. However, I would suggest that the significant differences of focus, value, and action found between the different styles requires each to be considered as separate and independent from the others. The descriptions that follow are presented as potential strategies for leaders to implement in different contexts.

Situational Leadership

The work of Hersey and Blanchard (1977) has been expanded to embrace the tenets of contingency theory. Through effective boundary scanning and the judicious development of contingency plans, the effective leader utilizes the situation to gain power, control, and influence over the actions of subordinates (Fiedler, 1974/1993). Such negotiation, compromising, coalition building, and resource allocation are the hallmarks of the political actor (Bolman & Deal, 1992). Situational leadership requires administrators to fully immerse themselves in their school community and be intimately knowledgeable about the context within which they work.

Managerial Leadership

The managerial leader focuses on the maintenance of a system. She puts great effort into planning and organizing the day-to-day operations of the school. Budgets are carefully constructed and rigorously monitored, resources are located and allocated, subordinates are coordinated and controlled, strategic and tactical plans are designed, prioritized and implemented. The focus, as Bolman and Deal (1992) have observed, is on the rationality, efficiency, structure, and policies of the structural frame. Drawing on the writings of business and public administration (e.g., Hayes, 1993; Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Simon, 1960), such a techno-rational or 'scientific' approach has been embraced by educational administrators since the middle of the last century.

Although this approach to leadership often results in a hierarchical and bureaucratic structure that is anathema in these postmodern times, there is still the need for such diligence. Teachers do not want to spend their lives making decisions about which company provides the best deal for buying photocopier paper, what colour should the paper clips be for the office, and what is the roster for washing dishes in the staff room. There is a need for managerial leadership in moderation, and moderation in management. To determine the overall budget parameters may be within the purview of the administrative team of the school; to involve teachers in the process of deciding how that budget is expended is good management practice.

Instructional Leadership

This style of leadership was very popular in the early 1980s. The focus of the principal was seen to be on the promotion of an effective instructional climate, on providing teachers with advice and support as they delivered the curriculum. On such

understandings were predicated the efforts of the effective schools movement (e.g., Edmunds, 1979; Lezotte, 1989; Teddlie, Stringfield, Wimpleberg, & Kirby, 1989) as attempts were made to develop a menu of strategies from which a principal could draw.

It rapidly became apparent that head teachers were not able to be curricula experts in all fields. Some teachers became disgruntled when principals were perceived to be overstepping their professional boundaries. "What the heck does he know about teaching the sciences? It's facts, it's real learning, not touchy-feely like the humanities stuff" exclaimed one teacher. This was after a principal with a background in English language arts had critiqued a high school physics lesson as being "rather boring" and "quite teacher focused, not utilizing the more modern collaborative learning techniques" (John MacDonald, personal communication, 16 March 1999). Although instructional leadership has become less common as a declared priority, responsibilities for many instructional decisions have been divisionalized (Hales, 1993) to the department level.

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1977) argued that the legitimate power of the leader only develops if the leader sees him or herself as a servant of those being led. The leader has to achieve balance between their operating and conceptual talents. In this view, the operating talent is that which carries the organization forward in its daily tasks and objectives. The conceptual talent, however, permits leaders to see the whole within the perspective of time, both past and present. The leader is not so much a charismatic visionary preacher as a cloistered monk or nun, one who views the role as a vocation where the desire to serve outweighs any need for peer recognition or professional advancement.

This approach to leadership has touched a chord with many writers (e.g., Morris, 1997; Thom, 2001), who see authenticity in simplicity. To have the leader as servant of the people calls to mind some of the great religious teachers of the past, for example Confucius, the Lord Buddha, and Jesus Christ. If the leader has no personal gain from her actions, it is argued, then the cause must be just and right for no ego or benefit is satisfied. This notion of stewardship resurfaces in contemporary discussions of community.

White Knight & Black Hat Leadership

Sometimes, a leader is 'parachuted' in to a school in order to 'fix' real or perceived problems. This rescuer is often dubbed a "white knight", for she brings rescue to those isolated in the dragon's cave. No matter how tense the situation or how hopeless the odds, such a "super head" will be able to save the day.

If wholesale staff transfers or redundancies are required, however, the metaphor changes from chivalry to the wild west, and the new leader is said to "wear a black hat" as she cleans up the lawless town. Incompetent teachers tremble as she comes stamping down the corridors, clipboard in hand, ready to assess and judge.

Such perspectives assume that schools are tightly coupled organizations within which the actions of one person, who embodies all the leadership qualities in that school, might have a significant and lasting impact. As Murphy, Hallinger and Mitman (1983) observed, this perspective also assumes that the principal can control her own work flow. For those caught in the maelstrom of public school life such an idea is ludicrous. I have often challenged administrators to sit down for a few moments before leaving for work and write a list of the "ten things I would like to achieve today". Then, at the end of the

day, to check that list against what actually happened. There is seldom any correlation. From the moment of arrival in the school they are enmeshed in tasks, situations, and circumstances over which they have very little control. They achieve many things over the course of a day's work, but these are seldom the things that were written on the list over an early morning coffee.

Indirect Leadership

The recognition that not all leadership is embodied within an individual is recognized in this style. Here, strategies are implemented which facilitate the empowerment of all staff to provide leadership. The focus is on the human and symbolic frames of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1992). It is recognized that the 20 year veteran teacher may be a more powerful leader than the person with their nameplate on the office door.

The indirect leader often leads by example. Rather than making a big fuss over teachers not being present to welcome children to the school in the morning, for example, she may take to being proudly visible in the entry way and the corridors. To encourage support for social or sporting events, the indirect leader is present at many and makes friendly contact with any colleagues encountered. Teachers are usually quick to pick up on such messages.

Collaborative Leadership

Lugg and Boyd (1993) suggest that the principal must establish external and internal linkages for the school. Externally, these linkages would require better communication, cooperation, collaboration and coordination with social agencies, community institutions, and the like. Internally, trust and collegiality must be established between teachers,

students, and administrators. The principal must facilitate this collaborative process if leadership is to be effective.

The establishment of external linkages is intended to establish much closer relationships between the school and other societal institutions and organizations. It goes beyond the identification of a local business that might sponsor certain events in order to be proclaimed a "partner" in the education process. Indeed, there has been a move in some Canadian provinces to establish community schools as full-service providers of many social services. In Saskatchewan this concept of School^{PLUS} (M. Tymchak, personal communication, March 2001) places the school at the focal point of the community. With activities and colleagues crossing jurisdictional boundaries, the principal is now responsible for much more than simply running her school. Health, social welfare, job placement, and even parole services might be located within the school building, and the principal must coordinate the activities of such diverse groups.

Ethical Leadership

There has been a growing recognition that the work of leaders is predicated on the value and belief systems which they hold. Notions of caring, of justice, of ethics, are the foundations on which observed behaviour is constructed. The works of Greenfield (1993/1977) and Hodgkinson (1996), for example, address these issues. The actions of the leader can not be separated from the value positions held, for understandings of 'right', 'wrong', or even '(not) appropriate', depend upon recognition of individual world views and beliefs.

Following the events of 11 September 2001, ethical leadership has (re)emerged as a discussion item. Would an ethical leader reduce the homes of many to rubble in the hunt

for a few? Was it ethical to express alternative reasons as to what prompted the attacks in the first place? Was it more cowardly to perform an act of "martyrdom" than to fire missiles from 100 kms? Reduced to the school yard, was it ethical to require certain students to stay home because they were perceived to be 'different' to the majority? Such questions continue to litter the landscape of graduate seminars.

Dialogical Leadership

Freire (1970) suggested that those with whom the leader was interacting often had a more complete understanding of their situation than did the leader. Thus, it was incumbent upon the leader to establish a dialogue with those whom she wished to lead. Only through discussion could truth be determined and appropriate action developed and implemented – action appropriate not only to the leader but to the followers as well.

There is a need for leaders to immerse themselves in their community of learners, to understand how certain actions are perceived and understood. For those who work in marginalized communities, whether new immigrant areas of major urban centers or the desolate Aboriginal reserve lands awarded by the Treaties of the late 1800s, school leaders are predominantly outsiders (Foster & Goddard, 2001; Goddard, 2001; Goddard & Foster, 2001). These principals must recognize that there will be attempts to mislead and misguide, and that not all actions will ever be fully understood by those who do not share the cultural heritage from which the actions emerged.

Transcultural Leadership

The recognition that contemporary workforces are not culturally homogeneous has led to the development of the notion of transcultural leadership (Simons, Vazquez & Harris, 1993). There is a need for leaders to be sensitive to, recognize, and accept different

cultural values and beliefs. The leader must recognize both the *emic* (perspective of self) and *etic* (perspective of the observer) in every situation. Thus, when someone of an ethnocultural background different from the principal behaves in a certain way, the effective leader is able to not only determine her own perspective but to recognize the underlying values and meanings of that behaviour from the perspective of the person making the action.

The notion of transcultural leadership embraces issues of communication. It has been suggested that 55% of communication is through non-verbal cues (Barbour, 1998). This can lead to confusing and contradictory situations. The Anglo-European, used to a more verbal culture, tends to accept the spoken and ignore the more subtle hints proclaimed by body language. This in true in many different ways, although two examples will suffice.

While at university I became good friends with a fellow student from another part of Canada. We got along well together, except for one thing. He had a different sense of personal space, and was often located only a few inches from my face. When I retreated, he felt this was an insult, and tried to return to a close position. Our conversations must have looked comical, with him advancing and me retreating as we tried to talk to each other. Second, a colleague who recently obtained a new position was aghast at his wife's angry response to what he perceived as good news. "I'd asked her if I should apply and she said she didn't want to go, but not that she wouldn't go", he observed. His wife felt that in saying "I don't want to go" and leaving the room, she had strongly expressed her opposition to him even applying for the position.

Influencing Leadership

The purpose of this leadership style is to achieve organizational goals by enhancing the productivity and satisfaction of the workforce. Such a person must, according to Miklos (1983), be sensitive to the issues of the day, know the source of those issues, and be able to recognize what values are involved. In maintaining a balance between contradictory forces, the leader can use these tensions to bring about change in practice.

Influencing leadership differs from indirect leadership in the intentionality that is involved. An indirect leader often leads by example, but her actions are grounded in a personal belief system that makes such action taken for granted in its nature. The influencing leader, however, is purposive in using that influence. The distributed nature of influence is such that this strategy, perhaps more than the others, is often demonstrated by those who have no formal leadership role.

The head teacher who would use this style is able to choose her allies carefully. The identification and cultivation of those who have informal influence within the school can be a powerful strategy. It has been said that "much can be accomplished if you don't care who gets the credit" and the principal recognizes this fact. By dropping hints in selected sympathetic ears, the principal carefully sows ideas and then sits back until it is time to harvest. Within days or weeks, at a staff meeting, one voice will pipe up to suggest the strategy so carefully implanted days before.

Marxiavellian Leadership

The principal can not act alone in achieving the goals and objectives she has set for the school. The micro-political interactions that exist among any staff provide opportunities for an alert administrator. Recognizing that there are class distinctions

within the staff, student, and parental bodies, the principal uses persuasion and exchange to manipulate the allocation of resources (Goddard, 1993). The subclasses of gender, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, and so forth, are played off against each other so the goals of the organization can be better achieved. Resources are allocated to the area where they might best serve the long term needs of the organization as determined by the principal.

It is sometimes necessary for the head to make strategic alliances with groups of teachers within the school. These groups have their own agendas in play, and it is up to the head as to whether she ought to accept the *real politik* of the situation or not. The timely distribution of scarce resources might assist here. For example, the percentage of a budget used for new maths textbooks might influence the vote received from the mathematics department on an issue related to student discipline. Such lessons may then be reinforced if a negative vote is followed by the withdrawal of previously enjoyed resources.

Transformational Leadership

The principal is not content with being the only leader in the school. Rather, she facilitates the development of leadership abilities within all the staff. She does this by identifying and articulating a vision for the school, conveying expectations for high levels of performance, and providing both intellectual stimulation and individualized support (Burns, 1978; Leithwood, 1994). The staff members are transformed from being followers to becoming leaders within the organization.

Such a transformation requires a heavy investment in the professional development of teachers, enabling and mobilizing them to act as change agents in their own professional

development. However, as Hales (1993) observed, "the mobilisation of employees is only a powerful management force if the mobilisation is in a positive direction" (p. 217). Such a direction might be found in the 'reculturing' (Hargreaves, 1997) of schools.

It must be recognized, of course, that a collaborative and professional school culture will not arise from the ashes of current practice without a major influx of resources. Of these, perhaps the most critical is time. It is through the allocation of time that a principal can facilitate the spaces necessary for teachers to talk to teach other, to observe each others lessons, to provide support and encouragement as required.

In a truly transformational school, not just the 'regular' teachers are involved in the initiatives. All too often supply or substitute teachers are the 'untouchable' class, brought in on the whims of daily need. A school that wishes to become truly transformational ought to develop a small but appropriate pool of possible replacement teachers. Then, using the sports analogy of 'bench strength', the principal has a core group of regular and reserve teachers from whom to draw when allocating tasks, constructing committees, and so forth.

Constructivist Leadership

Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, and Slack (1995) suggest that leadership is not learned but rather is made by the leader and the followers, working together. They argue that traditional models are male-thinking and need to be carefully analyzed, as women's ways of knowing may lead to different leadership methods. In constructing what leadership is, and perhaps as importantly agreeing on what it is not, all members of the staff participate in both its development and practice.

It is though the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of meaning that a school might develop its own understandings of effective leadership. In this way it becomes possible for a school to determine a less hierarchical, or a more collaborative, approach to "the way things are done around here". In this manner the lines of demarcation between 'leadership' and 'followership' are blurred and, in some cases, erased. The skills, abilities, and knowledge of all individuals are accepted in the decision-making process. The role of the formal leader is to ensure that all constituents are involved, to the extent that they wish, in the construction and enactment of leadership within the school.

Lessons from the Inuit

The preceding description of fourteen leadership styles might be considered part of the 'science' of administration. These are skills that can be learned and practiced. It is in the implementation, however, that the 'art' of leadership becomes apparent. To understand the science of school administration is one thing. To understand which style is appropriate under which circumstances, and to male an instantaneous decision in this regard, is quite another. It is in discussing the art of leadership that I turn to the metaphor of an Inuit dog-team.

In the high arctic the winds scour the land. There is little precipitation. The low plains are covered with a thin veneer of snow, which then blows around for months, alternatively obscuring and revealing the natural features of the landscape. The ice cracks and heaves, sometimes forming high ridges and at other times parting to reveal the cold slate sea.

Across this land travels the Inuk, his primary means of transportation the *komatiq*, a sled drawn by a dozen or more dogs. These dogs are not harnessed in a neat row, as are the dogs of the Dene or the Woods Cree, for there is no need here to navigate through the closely growing trees of the northern or Boreal forest. Rather, the dogs are each tied to individual lines connected to the front of the *komatiq*. The Inuk will change the position of the dogs as he sees fit, for some are better in the areas where there are leads, stretches of open water, as they are somehow able to tell when thin ice will bear the weight of the sled and its supplies. Others are better suited to finding the easiest ways across a series of ice ridges which might rise so high they block the horizon. Yet others can sense the location of a predatory polar bear, and guide the Inuk away from the danger before he even knows it exists.

The land is open but it is not empty. There are many obstacles between the Inuk and his destination. It is in his ability to read the landscape, to select the correct lead dog for the circumstances, that he pins his survival.

The school principal exists in a similarly forbidding terrain. Her landscape is full of dangers, both hidden and observed, and there are many obstacles between the place where the school exists *now* and the destination described in the vision statement so carefully constructed. The principal pins her survival on the ability to read this landscape, to select the correct leadership style for the circumstances, and to guide the *komatiq* which is the school across the wasteland to the safety of the camp.

The sled is loaded with a variety of bundles. Here, in the center, are the students. At the front, mainly, with a smaller bundle at the back, are the teachers. Pushed in to the back are the parents, and along the sides the community, the school board, provincial

department of education employees, university professors, and other miscellaneous groups. Crammed into all the available nooks and crannies are the resources for the school, possibly not enough for the journey but all that were available when the time to travel arrived. The principal checks the load, makes sure that everything is tied down, and scans the horizon through squinting eyes.

The destination is known, for she has been there before or has read about it in the books that make up the maps of educational reform and renewal. Yet it is also not known, for her travel to there has never been from this place. The destination is over the horizon, and the first part of the journey is across unfamiliar ground. A tentative path is determined, the principal mentally mapping the territory she can see in front of her. She selects the leadership style that she thinks is most appropriate for this terrain, and harnesses it in the lead position. The other styles are tied on individually, extending in a fan shape from the central hitch. Each will share in the pulling of the sled, but only one will be breaking trail at any given time. As the land changes, as different circumstances arise which require different tactics, so the principal will change the lead style around.

The recognition, indeed prediction, of which contingency variables are likely to be encountered enables the principal to establish a proactive administration. Through this imaginization (Morgan, 1997) of the future, the principal moves beyond the maintenance of the school system and enters in to the practice of systems change. As the circumstances change, so does the leadership style employed. In one instance, the principal may face a request from a community group to use the school parking lot for a Saturday morning pancake breakfast; here she employs her managerial style and provides a prompt response. Later, she is attempting to introduce a new discipline code to the

school. Here she engages the staff, students, and parents in a constructivist discussion to determine the parameters and consequences of (un)acceptable practice.

It is in the ability to predict which style will be appropriate before there is an emergency that the effective principal will make a difficult journey appear quite untoward. This is a search for *sprezzatura*, an Italian renaissance term that implies the "ability to do something of great difficulty or complexity as if it had cost no effort at all" (Chambers, 1996, p. 96). Such is the image projected by many an admired principal.

With the dogs hitched, the sled loaded, and the direction set, the Inuk does not consider his task complete. He does not now climb aboard the *komatiq* and rest. Rather, he runs alongside the sled, urging the dogs to run faster, to slow down for that patch of soft snow, to veer left in order to avoid the widest leads, to stop and huddle in the lee of a ridge so as to avoid an oncoming storm. Sometimes he uses his whip, pushing the labouring dogs to even greater efforts. Sometimes he hauls upon the ice brake, slowing the team from its breakneck pace. Sometimes he jumps onto the edge of the sled and tightens a rope, or rearranges the load for better balance, or shifts an unwieldy bundle to another part of the sled. Sometimes, perhaps, across a rare smooth field of ice, he sits on the back of the *komatiq* and waggles his feet and enjoys the view.

Such reflective moments are equally rare for the principal. For most of the time she is scanning the landscape. Is that a storm coming up over the horizon? Is that a problematic pack of wolves following behind in the tracks? Is that a soft spot ahead where special care must be taken? Is the load properly balanced and the various bundles in a proper relationship to each other? Is the optimum load being carried for the resources available?

These are the questions asked by the principal on a daily basis. Although the questions seldom differ, the answers are rarely the same.

Emergent themes

In utilizing the metaphor of an Inuit dog-team to explore notions of school leadership, three themes emerge. First, it is apparent that the relationships between the Inuk, the *komatiq*, and the dogs are intricate and reciprocal. The Inuk must be able to both lead and follow the dogs; the dogs must be able to both guide and be guided; and, the sled must hold a balanced and moderate load.

Second, and further to the first, the inter-dependency of Inuk and dogs is such that 'leadership' is difficult to define. Whereas the Inuk selects a certain lead dog for certain conditions (thus practicing leadership), he might then help to maneuver the sled in the direction the dogs want to go (thus practicing followership). As such, the relationship is not dichotomous but rather an example of "two principles which oppose one another in their actions … [and simultaneously] produce one another and overcome one another" (Hooker, n.d., p. 2). At any one time, then, the Inuk is both leading and following, although one act has temporary dominance over the other.

The third theme relates to the size and arrangement of the load, which must be such that the sled can be pulled by the dogs. In addition to the cargo being transported, the sled must also carry the resources required for a successful journey. Further, these goods must be arranged in such a way that the sled is balanced and will not be upset should a rough environment be experienced.

These three themes can be reviewed through an educational lens. The leadership-followership relationship has consumed many writers, who strive to understand whether

and when teachers might be leaders and principals might be followers. Such discussions often sink in to a slough of arguments related to specific aspects, the minutiae of politics, power, and so forth. I would suggest that we accept the fluid location of leadership, consider that both it and followership may emerge at different times, to different people, and recognize that there is no one "correct" interpretation of this relationship. Indeed, the leader in one endeavor might quite logically be the follower in another. Such thinking requires us to break the shackles of hierarchy and position, and to focus on the function rather than the role of leadership.

I would suggest that leadership and followership can be contemplated as opposite principles, the Yin and Yang of educational administration. The cyclical nature of these opposing phenomena means that each will turn into its opposite in a cycle of reversal, that each has within it the seed of its opposite state, and that even if the opposite is not currently visible it is always there, for "no phenomenon is completely devoid of its opposite state. … This is called 'presence in absence'" (Hooker, n.d., p. 2). The use of the dog-team metaphor allows us to better grasp the complexity and inter-dependency of the leadership-followership relationship.

Conclusions

This, then, is leadership for the new millenium. It is neither static nor discrete, neither bounded nor prescribed. This is contingency theory leavened by the realities of the postmodern era.

There is a growing need for school leaders to recognize that the building is no longer separate from the community. Indeed, I am not sure that it ever was. In the early years of compulsory primary education, one-room schools were very much part of the fabric of

the community they served. The post-war baby boom, coupled with the collapse of the agricultural industry and migration to the urban centers, led to a huge increase in children attending school. This, in turn, resulted in a movement towards a factory model of education, where more and more children were crammed into limited space. As the buildings became more crowded and less personal, so the bureaucratic management style became ascendant. It was impossible for principals to individually know all their students, and so in order to maintain the illusion of fairness they pretended to know none.

In these postmodern times we are rediscovering the importance of community. We seek to recreate safe and appropriate spaces wherein effective teaching and learning can take place. We strive to provide a caring environment where individuality is preserved but not at the cost of cohesiveness and community. Here children can learn not only the academic knowledge required for success in the world beyond school, but can also find spiritual and physical maturity. The membrane between school and community has become translucent to the point of invisibility. As school children perform community service for their citizenship credit, so elections are held in gymnasiums and parents meet every Thursday evening in the art room for their pottery classes. As the school sends notes home to parents, so the parents and the home become part of the school. As the children arrive at classes and the parents volunteer their time in the teachers' room, so the school becomes part of the home.

In the world outside this community, departments and ministries of education issue new edicts related to curriculum and assessment. Parents claim that the school is unsuitable for their children, because it is not providing them with a strong focus on basic education. Daily newspapers describe the latest whereabouts of pedophiles. Parents claim

that the school is unsuitable for their children, because it is not providing them with enough knowledge about information technology. Companies dominant in the town lay off thousands of employees. Parents claim that the school is unsuitable for their children, because it is not preparing them for jobs in the real world. Sports heroes reach dizzying heights of success, or rapidly fall from grace. Parents claim that the school is unsuitable for their children, because it is not preparing them for university.

It is in this landscape that the principal functions. As the Inuk scans the horizon for storms, ice ridges, polar bears and weak ice, so the principal scans her landscape. She must rely on the contents of the educational *komatiq*, on the students, teachers and resources with whom she must work. There is no opportunity, out here on the sea ice, to suddenly replace items with new ones.

Informed by a knowledge of the landscape through which the community must pass, assisted by an ability to read her changing environment, the leader guides the school across difficult terrain towards an established goal. She selects different leadership styles as appropriate, but does not discard the ones that are not best suited for the task in hand. Rather, she uses their strengths as needed, and keeps the different styles close so that she might always be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. She cajoles and inspires, threatens and rewards, and sometimes gets the opportunity to rest along the way. At such times the journey becomes worthy of the effort, and there comes a moment to relax and gaze at the flowers that line the path. Then, as Wordsworth (BBC, 1996, p. 17) noted,

in vacant and in pensive mood

they flash upon that inward eye

which is the bliss of solitude.

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