

Twenty-One Varieties of Educational Leadership

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For a sympathetic smile about the leaders you have known, we recommend reading this article by Lowry W. Harding, associate professor of education, Ohio State University. A second reading, we suggest, may turn each reader to a bit of self-analysis.

EVERYONE RECOGNIZES the important, even strategic, role of *Leadership*. Leadership is composed of many qualities and—according to some—the absence of certain qualities, as well. In short, Leadership is a rare and precious combination, a sort of catalyst of human relations.

There are many kinds of Leadership. In education there seem to be more varieties than anywhere. For example, the major role of Leadership is said to be the meeting and solution of problems. Since all institutions tend to be self-perpetuating, the first maxim of *Leadership in Education* is obvious. Problems must be recognized and faced, but left unsolved in a masterful manner. If the problems were solved there would be no need for Leadership. Where would Education be without Leadership? And where would Leadership be without Educational Problems?

The proper recognition and non-solution of Educational Problems requires a high level of ability. It must be studied to be understood. To understand Leadership, it may help to study it in action. Such study reveals that there are certain major types of Leadership:

1. *The Autocrat*. This variety takes a

serious view of its responsibilities. Issues and proposals are faced squarely as they are presented. The first question asked is, "Will this work?" Such a question throws the burden of proof on those making the proposal. Since they *cannot demonstrate* that it will work until allowed to try it, and responsible leadership *cannot allow* it to be tried until shown that the proposal will work, the situation is saved. The status quo is preserved.

2. *The Cooperative Variety*. Self-effacing in a deliberate way, leadership indicates that it does not want to dominate the group. It is shown that a decision should not be reached until all have expressed themselves. Since there are always a few timid souls who cannot be induced to speak, and more than a few brass-lunged talkers, the leader can continue as a cooperative group member with no danger of facing a decision.

3. *The Elder Statesman*. This variety is frequently called the "fatherly type." Few individuals have the temerity to make proposals to one who has seen so much in his time. When a suggestion is made, it is easily lost in the maze of recollections or shrinks to insignificance

when compared with much greater problems which have been faced in long years of leadership.

4. *The Boyishly Eager Variety.* Each problem is met with a fresh flow of enthusiasm. Interest increases as the intriguing possibilities of the suggestion are explored. Increasingly thorough and elaborate means are proposed for handling it. Soon it becomes so complex and involved that no one will attempt to carry it out.

5. *The Pontifical Variety.* Proposals are heard with a solemn mien. In a sepulchral voice it is explained that only the elect, the few chosen for the inner circle, are appropriate to consider a proposal of such import. In hushed tones, an accolade is given the one who made the proposal, with the implication that one ordinary mortal surely is not able to think up such an idea and also push it. The matter is then dropped as a mark of proper respect to its importance.

6. *The Honestly Muddled.* It used to be easy to know what to do. Nowadays, with so many ideas and proposals, it is harder to see the right direction. It is stated humbly that leadership wants to carry out the plans and purposes of the staff. To be sure of doing that, action must be delayed until the members of the staff agree on the proposal. There is very slight chance that they will agree. This chance is eliminated by a few muddling questions as they near agreement.

7. *The Loyal Line-and-Staff Variety.* The keynote is loyalty, especially to the

higher echelons of Authority. All issues are referred to the "next-in-line"—supervisor, superintendent, board of education, commissioners, or council. There they are tabled, pending settlement of business on hand.

8. *The Educational Prophet.* This variety always takes "the long view." In the foreseeable future there are predicted changes of such a sweeping nature and great magnitude that the present proposal is seen as insignificant. It may be even a handicap to greater improvements to come later. Proponents retire in confusion.

9. *The Scientific Variety.* Precise and exact, no move is made without a thorough study. One of the first questions asked is, "What is the norm of present practice?" Another may be, "In what direction is the trend?" These questions threaten to expose the ignorance of those making the proposal, so it is dropped. Ultimately, trends may be found in both directions, showing that any move may be wrong.

10. *The Mystic.* This variety is always broad and deep in view. Proposals are examined in the light of the Ultimate Good, their contribution in developing the growth potential, and their effect upon the unique character of the individual. When phrases such as "basic experiences," "social dynamics of the situation," "intuition," "insight," and "higher intellectual processes" fail to work, persistent individuals may be accused of "looking for specifics."

11. *The Dogmatic Variety.* As soon as a proposal is made, preferably before it

is explained, a few choice platitudes are stated firmly. It doesn't matter whether they are right or wrong. "Everyone knows that grades are vicious" or "Of course, some grades are a necessity" may be equally effective if presented in a sufficiently devastating manner and tone. Another type is the earnest and concerned, but firm, "I don't want to be dogmatic about this, but—" The suggestion is "butted over" for keeps.

12. *The Open-Minded.* This variety states freely that no brief is held for any particular school of thought. For some leaders the school of thought never keeps, and ideas blow through without let or hindrance. Each proposal is swept away by new ideas coming later. The less chaotic of the open-minded variety are receptive to all proposals. Showing interest, they ask for details. Each detail stimulates interest in further detail.

13. *The Philosophic Variety.* This type sees the need to examine all points of view and asks, "What is the *real* meaning of this proposal?" Since the meaning is in the proposer rather than in the proposal, it takes a while to define it. If necessary, a consideration of means-ends relationships is used to dispose of the idea permanently.

14. *The Business Expert.* He reduces everything to its simplest terms—time, staff, money—and points out that there is not enough time for present activities. It's easy to get agreement on that. When he asks, "Where can I get a competent staff these days?" everyone looks pained and feels guilty. In a hollow voice comes the question, "Can this be taken care of in the present budget?"

Since all budgets for education are too small, this ends the proposal.

15. *The Benevolent Despot.* Champion of staff welfare and Lord High Protector, the Boss has a sure approach to all suggestions. He agrees that the proposal is probably a good idea, but says he must protect his staff. He may ask if anyone has a load light enough to do this extra work. The good ones are already carrying two loads. The poor ones will not admit that they are not overworked. Everyone retires from the situation with faces saved.

16. *The Child Protector.* Pointing out that the schools exist for the welfare of the children, this individual states sententiously, "Our children are too precious to be experimented with." This implies that those making the suggestion would exploit children. When he asks if the idea advanced promotes the Child Development Point of View or the subject-matter approach, the problem is then secure for some time.

17. *The Laissez-Faire Variety.* Indicating that those making proposals are responsible for them, this kind gives freedom to everyone to work out his problems—on his own initiative, of course. This policy sharply reduces the number of suggestions. Staff members may work to keep each other from trying anything new, for fear that it may spread. Jealousy and criticism take care of any remaining proposals.

18. *The Community-Minded.* This variety promptly raises the question, "Is the Community ready for this step?" Since no community is ever known to

be ready for any step away from familiar practice, all proposals for change may be laid aside. They may even be given an accolade, "It's a good idea but *this* community isn't ready for it." There the matter rests. If not, a school survey may be a last resort.

19. *The Blasé Cynic*. Sees all—knows all, even before it is explained. Proposals are heard in a tolerant, even gently contemptuous, manner. Warily the answer is given, "Yes, it sounds like it might be a good idea, but those things never work." If necessary, the names of a half-dozen communities are cited, implying that this particular idea was tried in all of them with unfortunate results. Naturally, that finishes that.

20. *The Optimist*. Cheery, ebullient members of this variety are superbly confident that everything is going fine.

Great progress has been made in recent years and schools were never better. Few people are vicious enough to puncture this bubble. Those who do are heard with a pained and incredulous expression; and they are then convinced that they exaggerate, need a rest, or have an ulcer.

21. *The Democratic Variety*. Rare, but they can be located after search. They hear all evidence on each suggestion, using an efficient parliamentary procedure. Action may be postponed by interpreting democratic methods to mean allowing each person to report at his own convenience. If group action appears imminent, a proposal may be divided into two parts. A committee may be appointed to study each part. Democratic leadership may announce that when the two committees make mutually favorable reports, it will be safe to go ahead. And it will be!

*The New Look in School Administration*_____

From two and a half years of work with the Citizenship Education Study of the Detroit public schools and Wayne University, Arnold Meier, Alice Davis, and Florence Cleary, all members of the Study staff, make practical suggestions for the extension of the democratic process in school organization and administration.

MR. GRAHAM, the school principal, reads current educational literature which emphasizes the need for and the effectiveness of democratic procedures in school administration. He is aware that democratic living places heavy de-

mands on the schools and requires able leadership on the part of their administrators. When he attends workshops and meetings, he is reminded that the human personality of the teacher must be respected; that teachers should have

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