



# Which Leadership Style — From the Head or Heart?

Gordon Cawelti

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*Some educational leaders may be like the corporation executives Maccoby calls "game-men." They are team players, love to win—and lack compassion.*

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Attempts to better understand the nature of leadership over the last two decades have frequently stressed the importance of leadership style. According to theorists, the most appropriate style must demonstrate equal concern for people and production (Blake and Mouton), or initiate structure and consideration behavior as in the Ohio State studies. Fred Fiedler has demonstrated that goal complexity is an important style determinant, as has Bill Reddin in his work analyzing the technology of the work itself. More recently, Hersey and Blanchard<sup>1</sup> have refined the situational model by suggesting that the maturity level of a group is the most important factor in selecting the appropriate leadership style for a given task.

There is much similarity in these different ways of stressing the need for flexible leader be-

havior. They have all made a contribution to the rich lore in this field. Few would argue there is one *best* conceptualization, although some theorists such as Rensis Likert have assembled considerable evidence to demonstrate that *their* model is most efficacious (for example, System 4).

However, attempting a comprehensive explanation of leadership with broad application to the realities of the practicing school leader's role is troubling. Can or should leaders be taught ("trained") to change a basic style or recurring mode of behavior? They can be trained to be more sensitive to the alternatives they have among styles, but evidence is limited that a very strong,

<sup>1</sup> See: P. E. Gates, K. H. Blanchard, and P. Hersey. "Diagnosing Educational Leadership Problems: A Situational Approach." *Educational Leadership* 33(5):348-54; February 1976.

goal-oriented leader, for example, can ever be fundamentally changed to become a strong, people-oriented leader. It is even less clear whether the value base of an individual can be shifted very much. But values are an extremely important determinant of the goals the leader pushes for or compromises on, and they obviously affect his or her interpersonal relationships with others.

A study<sup>2</sup> of 250 top management personnel in 12 high technology, multinational corporations in the United States sheds insight into the value issue. Based on extended interviews, questionnaires, and psychological testing, Michael MacCoby examined the nature of those individuals who are "making it" to the top management spots in these corporations today and why. It is an important study, some say of equal significance to Whyte's *The Organization Man* or Reisman's *The Lonely Crowd* in the 1950s, which tended to show that conformity to existing company mores was the path to success in corporate life. MacCoby's study found this has changed, and he identified four species of managers today among these elite companies:

- *The craftsman*—concerned with perfection of the product, prides self on quality work, tends



to be quiet, modest, and practical, but doesn't enjoy leading out in complex organizations.

- *The jungle fighter*—seeks power over subordinates, does considerable politicking to get ahead, "eat or be eaten" type.

- *The company man*—concerned with the human side of the corporation, works to maintain stability and integrity, adheres to policy closely, the "organization man" of old.

- *The gamesman*—is challenged by strong competition and winning over it, enjoys technological advances, wants to be a winner, likes to take risks and motivates others, is a team player for the corporation. "The contest hypes him up and he communicates his enthusiasm thus energizing others."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, while Whyte found the company man's conformity the predominant style at the top echelons, two decades later MacCoby's research suggests the risk-taking, competitive gamesmen more likely to be in the top leadership

<sup>2</sup> Michael MacCoby. *The Gamesman*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976. p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

## CRAFTSMAN

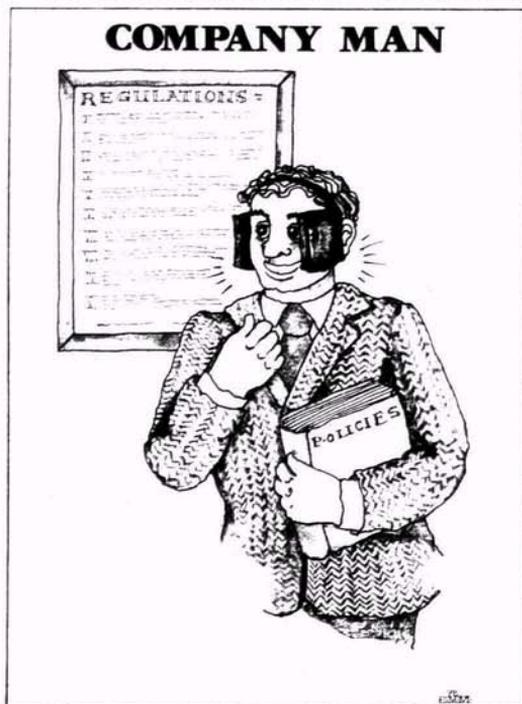


roles in the corporate world. There are similarities among educational leaders. Maccoby noted that even the gamesman is more cautious today than in the 1960s. The charismatic educational leaders of a decade ago are fewer and farther between today. But there are some among the ranks of superintendents, principals, and other instructional leaders.

The conservative tempo of the times has slowed down many educational gamesmen.\* One east coast superintendent, who was a highly visible innovator in the 1960s, recently told me he wasn't going to start up any more educational innovations (programs) unless the staff came to him and demanded it. "I've been bloodied enough . . ." was his reason for caution in the 1970s.

Think big. Systems minded. Devise strategies. Create winning teams. The genius of the gamesman lies in managing process, according to Maccoby. But what happens to the personality of this new corporate leader on the way to the top? Does the social structure of the organization mold the leader's personality or does his or her personality determine the leadership style?

Maccoby attempted to answer this by having



the 250 executives check from among a list of those traits considered important to *success* in the work itself, and then having them check which traits were *rewarded* by the mores of the organization. He concluded from this data:

Corporate work in advanced technology stimulates and reinforces attitudes essential for intellectual innovation and teamwork, qualities of the head. And these traits are required for work. In contrast, compassion, generosity, and idealism, qualities of the heart, remain unneeded and under-developed.<sup>4</sup>

The only exception to this was with regard to honesty (a quality of the heart) which 72 percent of the executives said was important for the work, but only 12 percent said the work environment rewarded this trait.

The gamesman on the way up normally does seem to undergo a personality change, which results in less of a sense of caring or empathy for others. When informed of this finding after the study was done, the executives seemed surprised and wanted to know what could be done about it—apparently they underwent this change unconsciously. The same was true of their evident lack of social consciousness on such issues as concern for the poor or other social injustices.

In summary, by the time the gamesmen had made it to the top, they usually lacked compassion and had not developed close personal relationships with other people. "Corporate work stimulates and rewards qualities of the head and not the heart."<sup>5</sup>

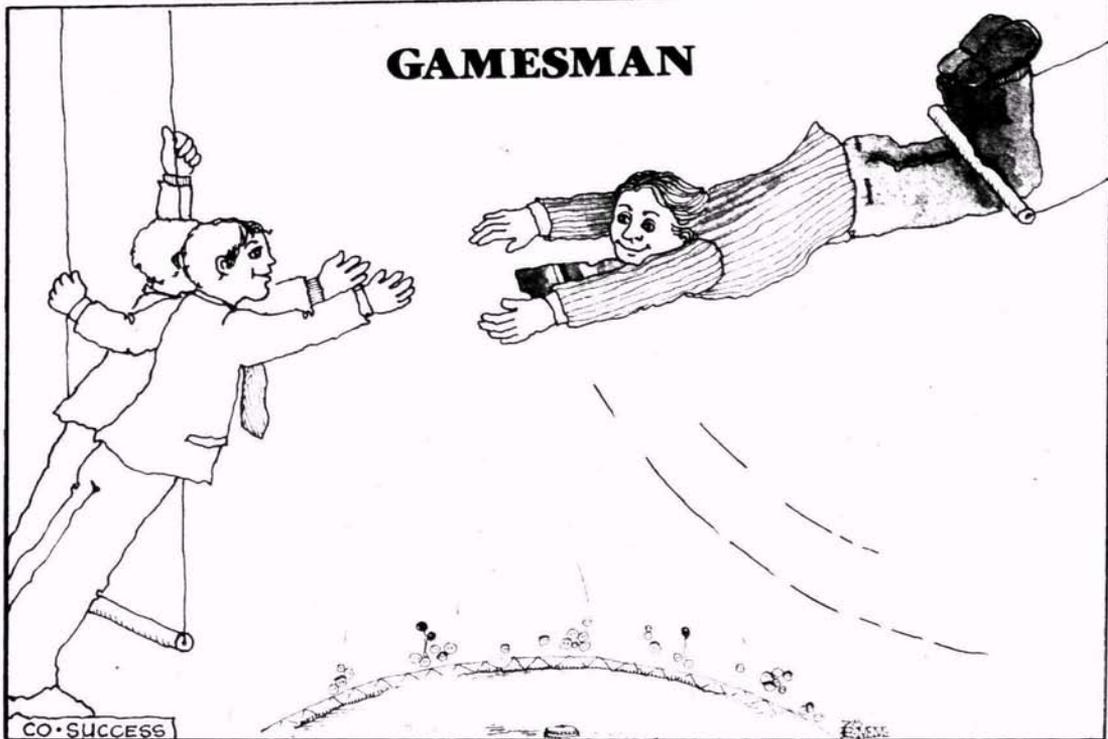
What are the implications of this study for educational leaders? The identification of the four basic styles of leaders is useful and helps in understanding variations in leader behavior. These styles are conceived along different lines than the interaction of concern for people and goals that dominates the literature, particularly by the situationalists. A few principals are gamesmen;

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

\* I've retained Maccoby's sexist designations throughout to preserve his leader types; as he pointed out, it was a macho world in which he moved. There are, of course, gameswomen too . . . such as the television executive role played by Faye Dunaway in the movie, "Network," and in real life.

# GAMESMAN



many in larger bureaucratic systems are company man types. In some instances, these may be better descriptors than using  $S_1 \dots S_4$  styles as in the Ohio State leadership model.

If the current management emphasis in education can be equated with "qualities of the head,"

*"We are all familiar with accountability by objectives, competency-based teacher education, PPBS, and proficiency tests. The expectation in using all of these is that education in the schools will improve as a consequence, with higher test scores serving as the ultimate criterion. There is no evidence to date that any such improvement has occurred. Indeed, the evidence appears to be precisely in the opposite direction."*<sup>6</sup>—John Goodlad

then the press for management by objectives, instructional management systems, and accountability must be developed carefully. John Goodlad<sup>7</sup>

(see box) has already cautioned that this management attitude will likely prove to have less efficacy for school reform than many seem to be hoping for. The excesses are already coming in. A principal in a large northern city was removed for changing test scores upward. Another state proposed to provide increased state aid for schools with relatively low achievement test scores. Performance contracting died with the cheating incident in Texarkana. A few years ago the Boy Scouts of America (symbolizing qualities of the heart) had a management plan for incentive pay when local scout executives met quotas for new scouts. Numerous instances of cheating were reported. This very strong press for results may inevitably expose the human frailties in all of us.

It seems apparent that the bureaucratic nature of schools, compared to the competitive nature of private sector corporations, makes it less likely that the excesses of the management approach will be tolerated. The nature of teaching itself, plus rigid legal requirements and collective bargaining for dealing with personnel, seems to

<sup>6</sup> John I. Goodlad. "Can Our Schools Get Better?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 60:342-47; January 1979.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

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assure that the qualities of the heart in school leaders will not be widely suppressed.

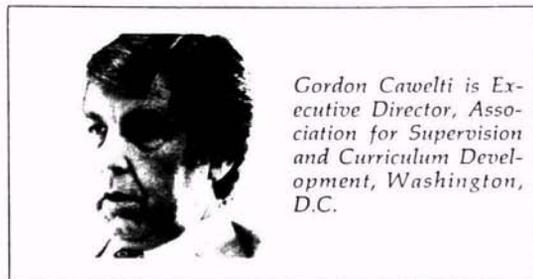
Maccoby argues that "careerism"<sup>8</sup> distorts the balance of head and heart qualities in top executives. I would add that the highly competitive nature of the business world gives rise to the careerism phenomenon. Senator Daniel Moynihan argued that the public schools need more competition as he helped push through the tuition tax credit bill. Although I vigorously oppose the voucher plan, which also fosters competition,<sup>9</sup> I do feel competition would be healthy for many school systems.

Educational leaders would probably fare better than corporation executives in terms of social consciousness. But we do need more risk-takers in the schools in this respect. It has always bothered me that school leaders remain silent on substantial social issues of the day. Normally, only the politicians and a few folks of liberal or conservative persuasion are heard through the media on such issues as abortion, welfare, taxation, or integration. Why don't educational leaders speak out too? How many superintendents are speaking out today against the decimation of a balanced curriculum—to their boards, citizens, or legislators?

The Maccoby study should be instructive to all who would be educational leaders. We must continue to demonstrate joint concern for people and goals as the situationalists would suggest, but also assure that we retain balance in modeling qualities of the head and the heart.

<sup>8</sup> The preoccupation many have with marketing themselves to get ahead; this results in high anxiety over failure and compels one to ignore idealistic, compassionate, or courageous impulses.

<sup>9</sup> Primarily because I see this as perpetuating racially isolated education even more than exists now in urban areas.



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