MBA AND THE EDUCATION OF LEADERS: THE NEW PLAYING-FIELDS OF ETON?

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The question of how to educate leaders is one that has long exercised the minds of philosophers, educationists and policy-makers, as well as those of some leaders themselves. Both Plato and Aristotle had famous and not altogether successful attempts at educating leaders, notably Dionysus II of Syracuse and Alexander the Great of Macedonia. Machiavelli’s attempt to educate the younger Lorenzo de Medici also comes readily to mind. That curious British institution, the so-called public school, evolved in the 18th and 19th centuries as the breeding ground for political and military leaders, the sort that were not too put out by the transition from the playing fields of Eton to the killing fields of Waterloo. Currently, the education of leaders preoccupies most of the world's chief business schools; it is the object of innumerable executive development programmes; and it sustains armies of consultants, executive trainers and coaches. Among academics, there are on-going and vigorous debates as to the scope, limits and effectiveness of different approaches to teaching leaders. These debates are themselves parts of wider and indecisive debates on the nature of leaders and leadership.

As a follower (rather than a leader) of these debates, I have often had the sense that arguments in this area go round and round in circles -- assumptions are made, then challenged, then made again, opinions harden, then challenged, then harden again. At various moments, particular ideas seem to offer radical break-throughs, e.g. management and leadership are different, leadership is the management of meaning, leadership is a relationship and so forth, only for the old arguments to resurface again, virtually indistinguishable from their earlier incarnations. Are we forever doomed to periodic resurrections of traits theories, contingency theories and even, the now hopelessly and politically incorrectly named "great man" theories?

One way of accounting for this messy situation is to view it as being what Kuhn described as a pre-paradigmatic state of knowledge, i.e. the state of a discipline
which has still not acquired a dominant paradigm, one whose concepts have not yet become sufficiently precise. In such a discipline, many ideas compete for ascendancy, without any agreed criteria for judging them, without any agreed assumptions that can serve as starting points. Much of the dialogue during such a phase is, in fact, an attempt to "define schools rather than produce agreement" {Kuhn, 1962/1996 #1343, p. 48}, with different scholars desperate to make themselves heard in a cacophony of opinion.

All the same, this explanation does not seem very convincing. If anything, the field of leadership seems to suffer from too much agreement rather than disagreement. In a recent article in the Academy of Management Learning and Education journal, Doh {, 2003 #2565} reports conversations with six distinguished leadership academics. Far from widely diverging views, these scholars, representing some of the world's leading business schools, appear collectively to offer a kind of orthodoxy or received wisdom, which could be summed up in a few propositions:

1. I believe in a thing called leadership
2. And this thing is capable of everything
3. And, I believe that people are born with different degrees of leadership, different innate abilities and dispositions
4. But, all the same, many aspects of leadership can be learned
5. And some can be taught
6. And the best way of teaching leadership, always respecting different local traditions, is experiential
7. And the teaching of leadership must be informed by ethics and morality
8. In as much as they do not really interfere with the bottom line
9. And I believe that leadership can be taught in many places
10. Of which, the great business schools of the world, are the greatest.

Or to paraphrase:

1. I believe in one God called leadership
2. And this god is all powerful and all knowing
3. And, I believe that people are born with different degrees of this God in them, different innate abilities and aptitudes
4. But, all the same, many aspects of this God can be acquired (learned)
5. And some can be bought (taught)
6. And the best way of worshipping this God, always respecting different local traditions, is experiential
7. And this God requires ritual sacrifices and a humble acknowledgement of the importance of ethics and morality
8. In as much as they do not really interfere with the bottom line
9. And I believe that this God has various apostles on Earth
10. Of whom, X is the greatest.

(Test: Fill in X from

a. Jack Welch
b. Nelson Mandela
c. Margaret Thatcher
d. Arnold Schwarzenegger)

Far from a pre-paradigmatic jumble, then this Credo represents a fairly broad common ground made up of assumptions, opinions and beliefs. From time to time, different voices may question one or other articles of the Credo, but, on the whole, the Credo persists. What is interesting about this state of affairs is that, the existence of the creed, far from settling into Kuhnian 'normal science', bringing comfort, satisfaction and complacency, keeps generating dissatisfaction, frustration and discontent. A lasting sense that our leadership theories are not good enough, that our leadership education programmes are not effective enough and that our leadership research is not scientific enough persists and possibly increases with every new break-through and every new discovery. With every leadership secret that gets unlocked, it is as if a hundred new ones are created. It is not surprising then, that echoing Socrates, my friend Keith Grint has said that "once I knew a lot about leadership; since I started reading about it, I have started to know less and less." The more we read, the more we talk and the more we research leadership, the less many of us feel that we know about it. And the less we know it, the more we seek comfort in the dogma of the Creed, a dogma which far from answering our questions exacerbates our discomfort.

What then do I hope to do in this presentation that does not merely add to the discomfort and dissatisfaction which, ultimately, reinforces the Creed/paradigm? My aims here are relatively modest. I want to present the results of an experiment in the teaching of leadership that I undertook with my MBA students at Imperial College.
The experiment was meant to test a particular approach to educating leaders. As such, I do not believe that it was especially successful. It was, however, quite revealing to me, throwing light as to certain aspects of the leader-follower relationship and also as to the ethos of the MBA, which I came to view as, at core, antithetical to educating students in leadership.

The specific point of the experiment was to test whether it is possible to educate leaders not by turning them into followers but by throwing them directly into the deep end of leading. This idea runs contrary to a large educational tradition which viewed obedience as the starting point of the education of future generations. The Spartan word for education of the young was agôgé, a term contrasted to the Athenian paideia. Whereas the Athenians sought through paideia to develop the individual’s diverse and unique potential, including leadership potential, the Spartan agôgé was much more directly aimed at discipline and obedience. Deriving from the Greek word for leading, agôgé aimed at inculcating in the Spartan citizen the idea that, throughout life, individuals must be subordinated to the requirements of state (something that applied even to the two Spartan kings). The core principle behind agôgé is well captured by the Jesuit, Herr Naphta in Thomas Mann’s Magic Mountain:

>'All educational organizations worthy of the name have always recognized what must be the ultimate and significant principle of pedagogy: namely the absolute mandate, the iron bond, discipline, sacrifice, the renunciation of the ego, the curbing of personality. And lastly, it is an unloving miscomprehension of youth to believe that it finds pleasure in freedom: its deepest pleasure lies in obedience.' {Mann, 1924/1960 #2566, p. 400}

This principle of education based on obedience has found numerous and diverse applications, from British public schools to the Hitler Youth movement – in all of these, the principle is the same: in order to lead, a man (and to a lesser extent a woman) must first learn to obey {Grint, 2003 #2567;Knopp, 2002 #2568} as a member of a cohesive band of followers. Such obedience has its rewards, especially when it forms part of a psychological contract whereby obedient followers are guaranteed protection, brotherhood and elite status. But as the basis for educating leaders, obedience has been questioned. One particularly convincing critique is that
when it does not produce quiescent acolytes, it produces authoritarian leaders who expect unquestioned loyalty, are rigid and stereotypical in their thinking, are unable to tolerate disagreement and display a variety of dysfunctional personal qualities. Dixon, for example, blames the public schools for the disasters of WW1 and for the appeasement policy of the 1930s. (Dixon, 1976 #1013, pp. 289ff) (Maccoby, 2000 #2102) Wilkinson (, 1964 #2575) Even assuming that authoritarian leaders may have been effective in leading certain types of states or organizations in certain types of situations, it is highly doubtful that they are remotely suitable to lead today’s Western organizations, where blind obedience can hardly be taken for granted, where an ability to display adaptive, flexible thinking and to play in front of the media are paramount. (I allude here to narcissism which is so much more in tune with our times than authoritarianism).

THE EXPERIMENT

The course was labelled "Leadership specialization", a real oxymoron; it was one of about a dozen such specializations, of which the students elected to take two. About 24 students opted for the course in each of the two years it has run. The course was organized as a sequence of eight sessions, one per week, each lasting an entire day.

In designing the course, I decided to start by removing many of the familiar safety nets that turn prospective leaders into followers. I announced the course with the following statement on the course hand-out, reiterating it in my first encounter with the students:

Leadership is imagining, willing and driving, it is not following instructions on pieces of paper. Make sure that the contents of this hand-out do not impair your learning but develop it.

Instead of proclaiming the course objectives, I left a large blank space in which I invited students to devise their own objectives for the course.

On the first day, I introduced the course as an experiment or more precisely as a laboratory for leadership. A laboratory is a place where experiments are carried out, a place of learning and unlearning, a place where success comes out of failure and
failure out of success. It is a place where people are vigilant, inquisitive and critical. Finally, a laboratory is not a time-capsule, it is a place of change, a change which is both inner and outer. It is not just that we observe new phenomena, but the eyes with which we observe also change. As you can imagine, the metaphor of the laboratory quickly installed itself as a safety net for many of my students. It suggested discovery, risk and boldness in an environment that tolerates failure. At that point, I find myself carrying out the first of a series of disruptions. The lab imagery can all too easily lapse into one in which I supervise the student's experiments or worse I treat them as guinea pigs for my own experiments. One can hardly imagine guinea-pigs emerging as future leaders and this is certainly not what I wanted to achieve. Also, as we all know laboratories can be liable to Hawthorne effects, with all their contrived qualities and distortions.

Throughout the first day of the course, I invited students to participate in a series of thought or action experiments, trying to stimulate their imagination, fantasy and will. The main type of experiment for the course was introduced – the 'leadership spot'. Each student was given a 75-minute period in which to lead the group in whatever activity, exercise, experiment they pleased. Inevitably, during the first week of the course, I was installed as the leader in the classroom, a role I relinquished from the second week of the course when I invited students to divide up their leadership spots, discuss them and start organizing them. I had envisaged that this process would be a difficult one, with many students wanting to take the later spots to give themselves more time for preparation. This maybe reflected my own anxieties about relinquishing the leadership position. As it happens, in both years, the process was accomplished quickly and efficiently, thanks to one or two individuals assuming responsibility for facilitating the process.

Leadership spots started on Week 3 – five per day. During these sessions, I offered myself as a resource to the leaders, each one able to use me for whatever purpose they wished, provided obviously that I agreed to act the part. The electricity in the room was plain to all, once I had taken a step back and students found themselves running the show. In the first place, they had to agree on a wide range of practicalities, regarding attendance, late-coming, participation etc. Time keeping and breaks between the leadership spots became important issues for negotiation, as well as the utilization of audio-visual aids, the re-arrangements of chairs and tables in the room and so forth.
One great advantage of organizing the course this way was that there was little risk of getting bored. An eight-hour day breezes by quickly and the entire course over eight weeks seemed to last but an instance. The variety of ideas on which students base their leadership spots was wide. They included:

- a singing competition
- a Japanese tea ceremony
- a variety of case studies, produced by students on topics they felt strongly about
- a variety of visioning, role play and construction exercises
- outdoors activities
- presentations by and interviews of distinguished leaders
- dissections of famous and infamous leaders
- analyses of films (e.g. The Godfather), speeches ("I have a dream"), TV shows (Dad's army) etc.
- staged debates and discussions

The one major change I carried out following the first year's experience was the incorporation of a 45-minute debriefing session at the end of each day of leadership spots. I had initially hoped that each acting leader would factor the debriefing into his/her session but throughout the course during the first year, this did not happen. Avoiding any overt debriefing, criticism or fault-finding became part of a covert psychological contract among the students, one that only unravelled on the last day of the course when we held a general debrief. In the second year, debriefing sessions were timetabled and proved very instructive. I tended to keep silent until the end of these sessions, but students were surprisingly outspoken in their evaluations of the day's leaders.

How was the course assessed? After the end of the programme, each student submitted a portfolio of materials which charted their learnings throughout the course. It was designed to capture total participation and involvement in the course. As a "portfolio", it appears as a collage – the different materials need not follow a formal order, nor do they all need to be perfectly polished. While it should show some evidence of reading and theories, the portfolio is distinctive in that it provides a richness of materials, unconstrained by a rigid order. Style can be informal and literary.
Entries to the portfolio may include the following:

- pictures
- anecdotes
- thought pieces
- diary-type entries about your learning
- links to current affairs or issues
- reflections on the working of the group

But, they must include the following (with indicative lengths):

1. A review of one academic book on leadership or extensive part of a book – this may not be a textbook (3-4 pages)
2. A review of one book by a leader or about a leader (3-4 pages)
3. Review of at least one article dealing with leadership (3-4 pages)
4. A detailed reflection on your own "leadership spot" – this may take the form of a small action project (3-4 pages)
5. Reflections on the course – including reflections of at least 3 other students' leadership spots (2-3 pages)
6. A short discussion of a leadership story – this may come from a book, a myth or may be directly related to you by someone (2 pages)
7. A discussion of one or two metaphors which guide, enhance or illuminate your thinking on leaders, their missions and their relations to their followers (1-2 pages)
8. A learning diary with no fewer than three dated entries (this may incorporate items 4, 5 etc. above) (2 or more pages)

Portfolios could be as long as students liked but, for the purposes of assessment, I only undertook to read the first 25 pages. Portfolios were judged as a whole, rather than on the quality of individual components.

**THE FINDINGS**

By most conventional measures the course was a 'success'. Student feedback on both years has been very positive, the quality of work produced on portfolios has
been commendable, external examiners' reports have been favourable and so forth. Some of the students' comments on their anonymous feedback sheets were especially re-assuring in suggesting that the course had been effective in educating leaders without turning them into followers.

"This has been the highlight of the MBA for me – an excellent learning experience and a welcome change from typical academia."

"The course was very interactive and the leadership spot helped me to boost my confidence as well as differentiate between being a manager and a leader."

"This has been the most important course for me. While other modules may have had necessary theoretical content, this course developed the practical side. If MBAs are ever going to try and create a link between theoretical and practical learning, then this course should become standard."

"I wish we had more courses like this on the MBA. This was one of the very few times that, as MBA students, we were able to discourse freely as equals. It may not have been quantitative, but I personally was more satisfied with this course than any of the others."

"The structure of this course is very unorthodox, relying on leadership spots prepared by students. Nevertheless the course works extremely well, and I think that students learn a great deal."

(Standard evaluation forms filled in by students)

Such comments may gratify the lecturer's narcissism but they hardly suggest that the experiment was successful. This is a far more difficult judgement to make. The
course undoubtedly shook the students out of the routine of MBA learning. It authorized them to lead and it legitimized ambition and drive. It encouraged them to think creatively and take risks. It brought to the surface some of the difficulties of leading others – working against apathy or indifference, cynicism and minimalism; it highlighted the difference that leading with vision, vibrancy and conviction can make, even within a 75 minute window. It also showed the importance of good management – failing technology, bad time-keeping, neglect of crucial details during the leadership spots were liable to cause frustration and even anger, spoiling some truly excellent core ideas and visions. The course illustrated the strength of negative feelings generated by badly planned, out of tune or presumptuous leadership. Maybe the most important lesson generated by the course for the participants was to highlight the responsibility carried by leaders when they operate without a safety net, relying on goodwill, persuasion and inspiration for the achievement of their visions.

It is here that doubts begin to arise from the experiment. All too often, I witnessed students following passively their acting leader, asking few questions and demanding few explanations, as if a tacit agreement had been struck that they would each make their colleagues' leadership spots as smooth as possible. On one occasion, during the first year of the course, a leader divided up the group into three sub-groups, assigned a leader to each one of them and invited them to build a structure out of adhesive-tape and newspapers to support a brick at as high a plane as possible. The students followed the instructions without asking for any explanations. The leadership spot was concluded without any discussion at all. Abandoning my usual non-interventionist approach, I ventured to suggest after the session that they had gone about the task "like sheep". I must confess that I was surprised by how they accepted to be led in such a manner (basically without asking questions). I was even more surprised by the effect of my intervention. The comment was picked up by many students in their portfolio discussions as a turning point for the course, a crisis point. They had sensed my disappointment but some had been insulted by the sheep metaphor. It was as if that particular comment unsettled what had been a tacit understanding of unconditional support. This incident was crucial for me in deciding to establish regular debriefs at the end of each day's leadership spots.

Another observation I made was the acting leaders' tendency to try and pack too much into their leadership spots, almost invariably running out of time and running into the timetabled breaks. Overstructured and overmanaged leadership spots meant that relatively little time was spent on ‘free and unstructured’ discussion or indeed on
‘thinking’. In a very challenging essay reporting on a different teaching experiment, David Levine argued that excessive action in a group can mark a refuge from thinking and a way of coping with anxiety – learning from experience then becomes a rationalization for repeating the same experience over and over again, without learning (Levine, 2002 #2553). I must confess that there were times I felt this was precisely how the group was functioning, moving from leadership spot to leadership spot, with feverish activity, dreading the possibility of ‘dead time’ available for thinking, talking or questioning.

I came to view the overstructuring and overmanaging of leadership spots was one of the ways employed by acting leaders to minimize their own anxiety, as well as that of their colleagues. They did, however, create new anxieties, namely those of running into other people’s allotted slots of failing to involve their followers in discussion. There were notable exceptions. For instance, an American student emptied the contents of her desk drawers and brought them to the class, divided them into four piles and invited the group, divided into four sub-groups, to do something interesting with them. This turned out to be one of the most fascinating exercises, where the lack of structure initially triggered acute anxiety and then quite impressive bouts of creativity. Eventually, the different groups used the resources available (buttons, bits of paper, pens, cards, etc.) as the wherewithal for different types of bricolage which included children’s games, impromptu sculptures etc.

Another occasion when intense anxiety was generated was when a leader (known as a prominent member of the LSO choir) invited three sub-groups to compete in renditions of the well-known song from The Sound of Music, "Doe, a deer!" In what turned out to be a fascinating session which took place in a public park, the fear of singing in public was gradually overcome, most notably by a group led by a Japanese civil servant. By teaching her followers to sing the song in Japanese she remarkably overcame their inhibitions.

I mentioned earlier the strong effect that my comment ‘like sheep’ had had on the class. One thing I noticed was that my taking a back-seat in the course made my pronouncements even more weighty, and certainly more important than I meant them to be. On one occasion, I remarked casually that “I wouldn't necessarily be taking this course myself” if I were an MBA student. I mentioned this in connection with the claim that this was to be a course ‘for leaders’ and for people who balance thought with action. I meant it half as a joke of the self-disparagement sort and half as a
reflection on me as an academic – as a person of reflection and thinking rather than
a man of action, I would probably seek a different type of course. Yet, several
students raised this comment in their portfolios as something that had undermined
their confidence in the course.

**WHAT MY EXPERIMENT SAYS ABOUT THE MBA**

Throughout the leadership course, I became aware of how difficult it was to evade
the position of leading the students on the course, no matter how hard I tried to
subvert or undermine my own position or to frustrate the students' expectations. The
less I said and the less I did, the more meaning was attributed to my actions and
utterances – almost as if I had become an oracle, whose every nuance needed to be
interpreted. In one instance, an acting leader excluded me from the classroom in an
attempt, he claimed, to free his colleagues from my presence. The response of his
followers after the leadership spot was not favourable – some claimed that he had
wasted a possible resource (myself), some that he had just tried to be provocative,
some that he had wanted to protect himself from possible criticism from me and
some, even, that he had been insulting to me by asking me to leave the room.

In the last resort, although some students had fleeting experiences of leading their
peers, my distinct feeling was that whether talking or silent, present or absent, I
continued to occupy the position that I can only describe as ‘leader in the mind’. And
it gradually became clear to me that the starting point of experiment, that of
educating leaders without turning them into followers, seems to run counter to much
of the ethos of the MBA which is to teach students in highly organized, highly
planned ways. It may be countered that experiential and action learning, composed
of case studies, role plays, simulations, outdoors activities and the like, are all meant
to develop the students’ judgements and characters as leaders – yet, even these
action learning devices invite the students to follow instructions, to observe rules,
and, most importantly, to suspend critical disbelief, in short, to act as followers. It may
be an exaggeration to say that MBAs, in general, breed an ethos of dependency, but
dependency is one of their major features, and a feature that encourages
followership, not leadership.

There are two other reasons why my attempts to entice my students to lead each
other were not altogether successful. First, there is the powerful ideology of equality,
collegiality and team-learning in syndicate groups, which in my experience makes the assumption of effective leadership by any one student very difficult, if not impossible. In work that I and a group of colleagues at Imperial College have carried out, we have identified the syndicate group experience as one of the most profound, and often most dysfunctional one, among our MBA students. One of the hardest things for such groups to achieve is an acknowledgement of the need for a leader or an acceptance of an individual’s claim to leadership, something that becomes almost a taboo. By contrast, the syndicate group experience mythologizes teamwork and proclaims the hero as a team-player rather than as a leader or as a follower. {Zaleznik, 1989 #526}

The second reason why leading others runs counter to the MBA ethos is the much debated consumerism that is becoming a defining feature of post-graduate management education. Now, I would be the last to argue that consumers are passive or that they accept uncomplainingly what they are offered {Gabriel, 1995 #634; Parker, 1995 #2550; Prichard, 1997 #2549; Sturdy, 2000 #1761; Ritzer, 1999 #1574; Contu, 2003 #2564}. I would certainly not view consumers of knowledge as simple imitators or followers {Gabriel, 2002 #2188}. I would, however, argue that the asymmetrical relation between consumers and producers is very different from the asymmetrical relations between leaders and followers. As consumers of educational products, students are in a disadvantageous position from which to lead others – they can complain, they can harass, they can pester, they can ultimately withdraw their custom, but they cannot lead their lecturers, their administrators or indeed their departments. The best they can do is occasionally lead delegations or rebellions, which maybe is one of the best experiences of leading others that they are liable to get on an MBA. All in all then I would conclude that my leadership experiment drew me to view the MBA experience as one of educating followers rather than leaders – committed followers to be sure, obstinate, hardened, lieutenants perhaps, but not generals. It is in this sense then that the MBA may be seen as a contemporary parallel to the playing fields of Eton. They are uniquely suited for people who can survive and even prosper in the merciless fields of today’s business – an idea that emerged during a conversation with Ian Mitroff.

**WHAT DOES MY EXPERIMENT SAY ABOUT LEADERSHIP**

Although the experiment has not been too successful in breaking out of the MBA mould, it has helped me address the paradox I mentioned earlier, namely that the
more we learn about leadership, the less we seem to know about it, the more doors we unlock, the more locked doors, we seem to find.

While reading the students' portfolios in the first year of the course, I sensed, in spite of their positive comments about the course, a vague disappointment that they still felt a kind of vacuum in getting firm answers on leadership. It became clear to me that the reason for this is because of the 'leadership mystique', the exaggerated importance we accord to leadership and leaders. Don't get me wrong – there are times when leaders can achieve miracles or appear to achieve miracles with the help and contribution of others. What is not possible is to regularise miracle-making through leadership into a blissful routine, into a single key that will unlock every situation. Pushing the metaphor, there are different keys for different situations; there may even be certain doors that need no key at all, but a firm kick to open them (Remember Alexander the Great and the way he unlocked the Gordian knot with a thrust of his sword.) What I am saying is that the expectation that all leadership challenges should be approached in the same way, through a single set of theories, is not just flawed, but the result of a fantasy of leadership omnipotence.

At the time of marking the students' portfolios, I came across the following amusing quote from a novel by Russo, called A Straight Man: "Every complex problem has a simple solution. And every such solution is wrong." It struck me how often this is precisely what we mean by the word 'vision', a simple solution to a complex problem. I would not agree that all such solutions are wrong, but many are. More importantly, the expectation that all complex problems have a simple solution is wish-fulfilling fantasy. Besides, sometimes even simple problems do not have simple solutions (remember the squaring of the circle or Fermat's last theory – the first has no solution, the second has a solution, but not one which any one of us would understand). Why should all or even most complex problems have simple solutions? By the same token, I would argue that many problems are resolved providentially, even if particular leaders assume credit for their resolution.

Although leadership, as we now recognize, may be a relationship, it is also a symbolic space where powerful fantasies are projected. No amount of emphasis on the relationship, can stop us lionizing or vilifying leaders. No amount of objective evidence to the contrary will caution us against expecting successful leaders to repeat their success and failed leaders to repeat their failure. And finally, most
important of all, no objective evidence will make us reassess the person, the object or the symbol that has come to occupy that important position in the symbolic space that demands to be occupied, that empty throne that demands that something or someone be placed in it.

In concluding this presentation, let me tell a very old story. In spite of its light-heartedness, it captures for me something of the lesson I learned from my experiment. The story from Aesop's fables relates how the frogs "annoyed with the anarchy in which they lived", asked Zeus to give them a king. "Give us a king, give us a ruler". Seeing that they were simple creatures, Zeus dropped a log in the pond where they lived. The frogs were initially impressed by the splash that the log made. They then started climbing on the log but, before long, they were disappointed that the log did nothing – it did not speak, it did not move, it did not rule. So they sent a second deputation to Zeus with a request for a new king, a 'real king' this time. Zeus got impatient with the frogs' nagging and sent them a water-snake; their new leader very soon had eaten up all the frogs (Adapted from (Aesop, 1998, p. 53)). There are times when no leader is better than an ineffective leader and times when an ineffective leader is better than a 'strong' one. But there are no times when the issue of leadership can be disregarded.