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**Leadership in Higher Education for the New Millenium**

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Further Education could be described as having moved from the 'Cinderella' of the education service to be recognised as a *'powerhouse for the national economy as well as the way forward for a multitude of people young and old'* (Dearing, 1998, p.13). The government has relatively recently changed from Conservative to New Labour and, according to Twining and Ward (1997), as a new government it will change things, *'by repackaging what is already there, or by adopting and re-branding changes initiated by their predecessors, or by introducing completely new ideas'* (p.8). The management force (or controlling force by dint of its funding power) for further education, the FEFC has had to reconsider its aims and modified its corporate plan for 1997-1998 to 1999-2000 in order to take account of the Government's new priorities. The FEFC (1998) report listed these priorities as:

*"Welfare to Work and New Deal; raising and maintaining standards and levels of achievement; widening participation and combating social exclusion; inclusive and lifelong learning; regionalisation; collaboration and rationalisation; appropriate funding for additional provision; effective governance and management"* (p.1).

This increase in importance of FE reflects the increasing importance of the education sector. The criticisms of the education system in the 1970s did not, as Merson (1994) suggested, take note of all relevant factors. He argued that:

*"The claim, by the Labour Government of the day [i.e. 1976-77], was that the education service did not transmit the relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes which were needed for a successful industrial economy...It excluded other apposite economic explanations, e.g. the role of newly emerging economies competing in manufacturing; the poor history of investment in industrial research and development in Britain; and the uneven commitment of British employers to investment in training"* (p.303).

That educational or economic crisis led to increasing government intervention by the Prime Minister and leading Ministers and from being an almost backroom ministry, the post of Education Secretary has been politically powerful. Since 1981 *'the position has been occupied by an established political figure (Sir Keith Joseph) and a succession of rising stars'* (Batteson, 1997, p.363). All have endeavoured to revolutionise our approach to education. The major revolution for FE came with the Further and Higher Education Act in 1992 which followed what was thought to be a substantial reform of FE in the guise of the Education Reform Act (1988) introduced to make colleges more responsive to the needs of employers. The 1992 Act was influenced much more by the ideology of the then government which demanded a market-oriented and competitive approach and insisted colleges had to increase their client group with a 25% growth in student numbers, improve their standards by raising staying on rates and completion rates, and reduce their costs. This environment of change continues, albeit with a new and a more supportive government. Whether or not this brings about a more buoyant and self-confident Further Education sector that will be responsive, flexible, cost effective and efficient remains to be seen.

The current government is using the recommendations and momentum of the Kennedy Report (1997) to help create a new philosophy about the purposes of education and has a 'key role in presenting the powerful vision of a learning nation' (p.7). Colleges have a major function to perform in achieving this vision and college principals a role in leading the way to its achievement.

This leadership research has concentrated on the roles of leaders at the top of the organisation in further education colleges; this is a concept of leadership that is by virtue of position and may be, at times, attributed simply because they have been appointed principal. It might also be termed strategic leadership. The study has adhered to the belief that principals as leaders do provide a beneficial effect on their organisations. Ogawa and Hart (1985) put a value on effective leadership:

*"[The study's] most important finding was that the principal variable accounted for between 2 and 8 per cent of the variance in test scores...findings of research on school effectiveness suggest that even small proportions of variance are important. Jencks and his associates demonstrate that only about 15% of the total variance in student achievement is attributable to between school differences. Further, Rowan and his associates conclude that about 5% of the total variance in student achievement can be attributed to stable state-level properties. In light of these results, the discovery that 2%-8% of variance in student performance is attributable to principals takes on a glow of relative importance" (p.65).*

Research in other fields has shown improvement attributable to effective leadership and Fiedler and House (1988) argue that even if differences in leadership behaviour do account for a relatively small proportion of the variance in performance, perhaps as low as 10%, this does not mean that the leader's contribution is negligible. Most leaders, as they rightly point out 'would give their eye teeth for this extra 10% of the variance' (p.83).

This may offer a false view of leadership in a modern institution as most organisational researchers agree that leadership in current successful organisations occurs throughout its structure. The research work in schools has shown this model of 'shared' or democratic leadership more readily than in colleges, and it is considered to be effective. Riley (1998) confirms this view and argues that:

*"The first thing to be said is that there is no single package for school leadership, no one model to be learned and applied in unrefined forms in all contexts, no all-purpose recipe, although there are some common ingredients...The final thing to be said about school leadership is that good leadership is shared" (p.19).*

Silins (1994) encourages principals by supporting the development of a shared leadership model,

*“Principals do not have a monopoly on leadership, but they do have a position in terms of status, power and mechanisms readily available to them that facilitate the operationalisation of leadership into process strategies which can lead to school improvement. A principal can demonstrate leadership by sharing leadership with others in the school” (p.273).*

Blase (1987) similarly argues that a principal can achieve more status by empowering others.

This research of college principals is based on the premise that management is different from leadership with Rajan and van Eupen (1997) offering a definition that supports this view when they state that:

*“management is about now, leadership is about the future; one implements goals, the other sets them; one relies on control, the other inspires trust; one deals in rational process the other in emotional horizons” (p.5).*

This view is strengthened by Millett (1996) who, as head of the Teacher Training Agency and responsible for setting up training for head teachers, asserts that *‘The central issue we need to tackle is leadership, in particular how the qualities of leadership can be identified and fostered’ (p.21).*

The results of this particular study indicate what principals identify as the attributes required for leadership, although one of the principals surveyed pointed out, *‘I agree with all of the attributes. That does not mean I or others have them.’* A recognition of an attribute and its priority does also offer the opportunity to consider style. For example, if principals rate highly the attribute *work with, rather than through, colleagues* they are unlikely to have an autocratic style of leadership. What the research has not attempted to do is identify which of the leadership attributes are associated with effective colleges.

There is evidence that since 1995 many colleges have not had effective leadership. Colleges have failed to maintain cost-effective growth and more than 60% are in financial difficulties. Confirming this the FEFC (1998) report noted that, *‘The 96-97 accounts suggest that the financial health of the sector continues to be poor’ (p.8).* The difficulties are due to poor leadership either from Government, Corporation (i.e. governors) or Principal. Bradley (1996) offers the argument *‘that external factors which influence a college’s potential for growth have not been taken into account when determining their funding’ (p.384).* But this is another variable that an effective leader has to take into account when providing the leadership of the college.

Further research ought to be carried out to identify the links between leadership attributes and leadership effectiveness as measured by current FEFC performance indicators. Such research would, in particular, be of vital help to corporation members who have the overall responsibility for the

success of the college, but who delegate much of this to a principal for whom they have sole selection responsibility.

Corporations require more information to determine successful models for the selection and support of principals and their senior managers. This greater knowledge and understanding of the college should come with time and increased involvement with the college. More meetings dealing with specific features of the college as well as the once a term board meeting would help in providing members with an improved perspective of the college. Beekun et al (1998) found in their work with hospital boards that the ignorance of board members led them to *'fulfil their oversight responsibilities by holding the CEO strictly accountable for the financial outcomes of the corporation'* (p.15).

The research has recognised that there are attributes, which are considered to be important to leaders but whose effect may vary owing to the influence of demographic factors. However, the research was not able to rate the importance of such demographic factors and thus which of them may have the greatest weighting in the selection or effectiveness of principals. In a recent study of leaders in the National Health Service, an example of a public sector body that has recently followed a similar corporate route to colleges and become market-oriented and more accountable to its 'customers', Korac-Kakabadse et al (1998) found that *'demographic characteristics are influential in forming leadership philosophies, namely job and organisational tenure and experience of senior management responsibilities'* (p.1) but unlike the research on college principals they did not find that gender influenced leadership. This study of college principals has found that the prioritisation of attributes for leadership is influenced by demographic characteristics including that of gender. In drawing inferences from the priorities of attributes it should be noted:

*"leadership is a very complex and contingent issue, that leadership qualities are not necessarily transferable across time and space, and that there may well be a large degree of pattern imposition here. By that I mean that the researchers may well bear considerable responsibility for deciding which traits are important by investigating some but not others"* (Grint, 1997, p.86).

The attributes prioritised by the principals are those provided by the researcher (no principal who completed the questionnaire changed the wording or added any other questions to the questionnaire) and may be found in Appendix 2. Principals' views may be restricted by the framework and content of the questions. This research on principals has occurred as they have moved from LEA led institutions to corporation led institutions. Thus the overall view of leadership from the principals may be modified as a result of the new experiences they are living through and the applicability or otherwise of the questionnaire. However, other public sector industries are going through similar changes and the results of recent research are gradually being made available.

Ghobadian et al (1997) studied the influence of the leadership of chief executives in the recently privatised Regional Electricity Companies (RECs) and their study could provide some provisional guidelines or benchmarks for the behaviour of CEOs in the recently incorporated FE sector. They went beyond the scope of this study in analysing the strategies and subsequent effectiveness of decisions in these newly changed organisations and concluded that the change in the industry was transformational. There was a great deal of evidence in the literature review for the transformational style of leadership in the turbulent 90s environment of colleges. Ghobadian et al suggest a change that anecdotally would appear to mirror changes in FE post-incorporation. They have acknowledged that:

*“...our analysis of leaders and of the behaviour of the RECs would seem to detect a response which would not normally seem appropriate to a transformational change. What we have observed is a change process which could more accurately be described as developmental, wherein a company becomes better at something, but doesn't abandon its foundation, roots or essential being; essentially an incremental approach, placing emphasis upon factors such as efficient operations” (p.40).*

The change process for FE has not been incremental nationally, but has occurred in a radical and rapid fashion from the 1988 Act to the 1992 Act. It has been accompanied by targets and a changed funding formulae with widening participation and government initiatives. The leadership from the current Labour Government is also seeking great changes and is regularly reinforcing its vision for education and the need for such leadership is not doubted in the literature. Working with service industries in the City of London, leadership was defined by Rajan and vanEupen (1997) as *‘first and foremost, [leadership] is about taking people where they have never been before. It is about creating an image of the future that induces enthusiasm and commitment’* (p.28). This is a methodology that the current government is endeavouring to use both in their communications and their actions for education in Britain.

In considering the results of the attribute survey of principals it was noted that they did not put as a priority *paint a clear picture of future change* which would be their complete vision, but they did rate highly organisation and *strategy to anticipate and react to future change* which represents routes to achieving their vision. Governors of colleges placed the *ability to provide strategic vision* as their second priority. This could lead to the conclusion that governors (or their recruitment consultants) are more aware of modern leadership approaches than are principals, and provides scope for speculating that governors are trying to bring in their experiences from outside education in order to improve the leadership of the college. Principals, on the other hand, might share Glatter's (1997) wariness of bringing in management practice from outside education. This wariness was in part because of the change of context and in part the concern that what is good practice now may not be good tomorrow as there are *‘fads and fashions - trumpeted for a while as the*

*acme of good practice'* (p.187). As Kennedy (1997) pointed out, new business practices have yet to be introduced wisely.

In analysing the comments of the leaders in their study Rajan and vanEupen (1997) recognised that in considering leadership and the leadership role they had to take account of the

*“characteristics of the leaders; the needs, attitudes and expectations of the followers; the circumstances and characteristics of the organisation in which they work; the social, economic and political milieu in which the organisation operates”* (p.24).

The 'political milieu' is now familiar to further education both internally and externally to the college. It has had a major influence on colleges since 1993 and looks likely to continue even under a more supportive government. Whilst this survey of principals has also drawn on a collective view of leadership the view does differ from that of the service sector as represented by Rajan and vanEupen (1997). This could be expected if the factors of influences on leaders in education are different from those in other service industries. In using the summaries of the survey of principals it shows that there is general agreement that there is a set of essential attributes for effective leaders. What the research has been unable to show is substantial agreement on which of the attributes should be in this set. The results of the questionnaire have offered a set of attributes that principals have identified as being important for leadership and there is substantial agreement between the principals on the top ten attributes. There are, however, exceptions which appear to be dependent on the personal/demographic profiles of the principals.

There were differences in the attribute priorities of men and women principals and these findings were in common with other researchers. Eagly and Johnson (1990) found differences between women and men leaders when they reviewed 162 studies examining leadership styles across genders and reported that,

*“... the strongest evidence we obtained for a sex difference in leadership style occurred in the tendency for women to adopt a more democratic or participative style and for men to adopt a more autocratic or direct style. 92% of the available comparisons went in the direction of more democratic behaviour from women than from men”* (p.247).

There is some evidence in this study that women are less concerned with structure than men but that 'caring' is about the same priority in both as typified by *enjoy working with and supporting colleagues* which is a mid-table priority in both groups.

Bass and Avolio (1997) quote from an article in Nation's Business by Sharon Nelton (1991) in which she asked: *'Are women's leadership styles different from men's?'* They use a comment from Fortune magazine in which Jaclyn

Firmani (1990, p. 115) wrote: *'Yes...and they are far better suited than men to run companies in the nineties'*. More broadly based research supporting a view of differences between men and women as leaders is related in a report, *Developing Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century* (1996), by the Economist Intelligence Unit in association with Korn/Ferry International. It forecasted that the new generation of leaders would have an equal balance of "masculine" and "feminine" personality traits. Men were seen as being risk-takers, self-confident and highly competitive; women were seen as stronger in building relationships and as being willing to share power and information. According to this research, *'leadership in the new environment is about taking people where they have never been before. It is also about developing the essential emotions, excitement and convictions that help people to cope with the journey'* (p.28).

Women principals had, *encourage creative skills in all staff*, high on their list and this too may signify a leadership approach that will be more appropriate for the millennium. Bhindi and Duignan (1997) proposed that

*"leaders in the new century will need to be more sensitive and caring in their attitudes and relationships and more adaptable and flexible in their practices if they are to release the potential, and tap the diversity of talents, of those who work with them"* (p.119).

The flexible practices and building relationships, both within and outside the college were attributes placed higher on the list by women than by men.

Kakabadse and Myers' research with senior managers in a large number of public and private companies was reported by Trapp (1998) who commented that the

*"...study suggests that the similarities between senior male and female managers far outweigh the differences...and shows that quality of management, communication, clarity of vision, and ability to relate within the top team and across the organisation, do not differ according to gender"* (p.1).

However, Lord and Maher (1993) recognised that *'women at all levels of an organisation are likely to experience some problems in establishing perceptions of leadership...'* (p.113). Such bias may affect many of the leadership processes and *'...may also limit women's ability to influence organisational effectiveness and performance'* (p.113). Other surveys of college leaders have shown that women work harder than men e.g. as judged by Rouche et al (1990). Their study of community college presidents in the USA found that *'On average, women worked a longer number of hours per week...a total of 75 hours per week at college activities'* (p.71). This was approximately ten hours a week more than the average male principal. The differences noted in the principal survey were that women principals were influenced by the nature and expectation of women within the FE environment. In a review that summarised the perceptions of women principals, Stott and Lawson (1997) thought that *'FE is still a very male*

*environment with which women have to come to terms if they want to succeed'* (p.55).

More and more women are succeeding in becoming principals and with that success perhaps their perceptions of leadership of the organisation will change. The education environment is already changing and will require the attribute related to networking, *build up an information network to recognise what the future may hold*, which women placed very high in their list of priorities (11<sup>th</sup>, and men placing it 27<sup>th</sup>). Riley (1997) argues that the more dispersed government of post-16 education now operates through a multiplicity of organisational markets and networks and such networks *'...require more explicit creation and maintenance and a mixture of formal and informal relationships'* (p.157). She further explained that, *'Successful networking can create financial gains for organisations'* (p.165). Under the current Labour Government more opportunities for seeking funding are via partnerships bidding to Regional Development Groups (DoE, 1997). Thus networks already in place have a head start in that process.

The results from the questionnaire survey of FE college principals has demonstrated, in common with other researchers, that there are a number of influences on the selection of attributes for leadership. Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1998) reporting on their recent leadership research in the public sector noted that age and length of time in the organisation were influential factors in affecting leadership. Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991) suggested that, *'Because of the learning and experimentation process, a CEO who leaves prior to completing four or five years in office has not had a chance to achieve peak performance on the job'* (p.738). From the survey it emerged the largest number of principals with tenure of six or more years as a principal were in the 51-55 year age range and if the hypothesis of Hambrick and Fukutomi is valid then the selection of attributes from this group will have more weight than those of other groups.

Such views on the influence of age or tenure on the leadership role have been supported by Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1993) and a part of their survey has been summarised in the following table:

**Table 11: Possible Links Between Leadership Characteristics and Leadership Approach**

Studies	Leadership characteristics	Findings/propositions
Alutto and Hrebniak (1975)	Age (D)	Older CEOs avoid risk and maintain status quo
Carlson (1972)	Outsiders v insiders	Outsider CEOs make more changes
Child (1974)	Age	Younger CEOs encourage growth and have more volatile sales
Guth and Tugiuri (1965)	Values	Leader values impacts strategy formulation. The extent to which Top management team's values match the leaders reinforces the leaders' impact on strategy
Pfeffer (1983)	Tenure and age	Youth related to more innovation; longer tenure related to centralised power.

In their studies of the electric power industries Ghobadian et al (1997) recognised three degrees of change in the privatisation process or immediate post-privatisation process, which were linked to tenure as well as insider v outsider appointments of CEO: (1) no change where the CEO has remained the same in the 5 years preceding privatisation; (2) small change, where the CEO has been re-appointed from within the company or from within the industry; (3) wider change, where the CEO has been re-appointed but from outside the industry. They identified that more innovative behaviour appears to have come from those companies that have seen more changes to their CEO. Cunningham (1994) suggests that this is because when a new CEO takes over a lot of new learning takes place to change what an earlier CEO has put in place.

Ghobadian et al (1996) had earlier concluded that the Regional Electricity Companies (RECs) were principally companies which exhibited 'defender' characteristics; that is to say they were companies that tended towards policies which emphasised efficiency over innovation. They tended to seek out niche market opportunities, emphasised hierarchical management structures, and were characterised by managers who had grown up with the company and who would enjoy long tenure of employment. For those of us working in FE this is not an unfamiliar model.

This provides further confirmation of the importance of chief executives and of the need to understand the attributes of a CEO if only to identify those attributes that are important to lead the on-going process of change in FE. The attributes prioritised by the principals may offer a guide to an effective approach to leadership in colleges. There were broad areas of agreement as well as some anomalies when analysing the results from the group categories of the principals. In leadership research even a limited review of the literature would illustrate that anomalies are common.

The length of time in management provides differences in leadership perception. Those in management for 21 to 25 years displayed two attributes which, when taken together were not priorities for other groups but which emphasised a people-centred approach and what might be termed a leader-follower emphasis. Such emphasis could lead to the idea that experience is vital for leaders but what has to be considered is not only the length of experience but also the quality of that experience. The research of Fiedler et al (1981) indicated that the length of time in an organisation does not contribute to effective leader performance. Bettin and Kennedy (1990) recognised that *'for experience to contribute to performance it must be relevant to the current job'* (p.226). The length of a CEO's tenure was found to offer differences in the priorities of attributes but the pattern of priority did not offer clear agreement with the Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991) premise of a season's model of CEO effectiveness. Early in a CEO's tenure, the organisation's performance will tend to increase. Late in his/her tenure, the CEO often adheres to a set of, perhaps, obsolete paradigms; relies on limited sources of information; and has little interest for either new or even maintenance tasks. Thus, at some point in a CEO's tenure, organisational performance diminishes. At that point, if it could be recognised, a CEO should perhaps be encouraged to either leave, or be replaced, identify or have identified for him/her, new stimuli for improvement. Those stimuli are probably from the board or corporation members in the case of a college principal. What has been discerned in other research is that the board itself may inhibit the work of the CEO and thus limit performance.

Birnbaum (1986) showed that on average a principal's effectiveness declines, or appears to decline as their term of office lengthens. In part this is likely to be because the early years of challenge and excitement in the role have gone and that principals become discouraged or disillusioned as they approach retirement. Birnbaum found that this decline may be due to principals being effective for the time and tasks for which they were chosen with attributes identified as suitable by the corporation but that they require more / different attributes as the environment changes.

The attributes selected by the principals also suggested that some seek greater control of their organisations than others; some maintain control via high centralisation and little delegation; whereas others maintain less control and allow decentralisation and delegation of many activities. At one end of the continuum would be high centralisation which will, according to Nahavandi and Malekzadeh, (1993):

*"take place at the expense of attention to process and employee participation as well as little encouragement of diversity... decentralisation resulting from a leader's low control, will entail focus on employee involvement and tolerance and encouragement of diversity (p.414).*

Decentralisation is a method that leads to the empowerment of staff and a sharing of leadership responsibility that was referred to by Riley (1997).

The most important attributes selected by governors were those of communication, team development and teamwork. When comparing the attributes prioritised by the governors with those of the principals, those in the 55-60 years age group had an attribute priority that most matched those of the corporation, with five attributes out of the top ten. These are also medium to long-serving principals with just under two thirds of them being principals for six years or more. It might well be that they are similar because the board was simply following the success of their last principal who could be the only principal they know, or following the paradigm with which they had grown familiar when working with their previous CEO.

According to Aram et al (1995) only a corporation that is designated as high potential can utilise fully all the resources available to it (see Figure 2 on page 206). This would mean that CEO and corporations must both aim to work closely together and that a principal should be supported in taking risks. The taking of risks is essential to provide 'opportunity and innovation' (Giddens, 1998, p.63). Whilst support of the principal is an important role of the board this will be helped if the nature of the support and subsequent working relationship is taken into account in the selection of the new principal. Therefore, although the attributes sought for candidates may vary, it is likely that a new principal will make a difference and in theory it will be a difference for the better.

Leaders require followers since, as Beckhard (1996) reminds us, '*the first principle of leadership is that it is a relationship between a leader and followers*' (p.125). Personal experience would support the placement of the attribute of *face to face contact with staff* as in the bottom six. The exception to this anecdotal experience is that of the principals who have been in post for 2-5 years. Such a low placement of this attribute by almost all the categories of principal is unexpected not least because modern theories of leadership, clearly articulated by Drucker (1996) are that, '*The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers*' (p.xii) recognises that leadership and followership are inexorably linked. It could be surmised that this lack of priority was because of having talked to staff in the early years of their tenure, principals no longer found it useful; or alternatively that they had built up their relationships sufficiently that they could continue them from a distance. It could also be because the college had grown in size and it had become difficult to have face to face communication with staff. Four principals in the study felt strongly enough to write on the questionnaire, that they would wish '*...to have face to face contact in an ideal world*'. A female principal in the survey wrote, '*How a principal is seen flows from what she does*'. She does not say whether the 'doing' is face to face with staff. Peters and Austin (1985) described how even very busy executives had ways of maintaining face to face contact with their colleagues and gave the examples of informal coffee breaks in company reception areas, meals in the company cafeteria where they could meet staff and share information. Leadership that is open and democratic would tend to rely on more day to day contact with staff, although not necessarily all staff. Kotter (1988) and Duignan (1988) agree with the view of Manasse (1986) that '*leaders lead as they manage*' (p.153) and that a leader's on-going daily tasks should provide opportunities to keep their finger

on the pulse of the organisation and the people in it. It should enable them to share and impart their vision and suggest their interpretation of events.

The future holds new challenges and Conger and Kanungo (1998) offer their view of the changes in the next century that will have an increasing impact and will occur globally, but affect locally. They put forward the following four areas of change: the economic environment; increasing every day use of information technology; the socio- cultural environment; demands for social responsibility in business.

It is not possible to determine whether or not principals will have all the attributes necessary to successfully meet such challenges, however, the attribute *ensure the organisation of the college will meet future challenges* was the only attribute to be in every group's top ten. They do not have *paint a clear picture of future change* in their top ten (only one group placed it their top ten, tenth), which showed that they were willing or felt able to provide the vision for their college and with it a 'guesstimate' of what might be the future challenges. They also had structures in place and some recognition that followers were required. The structure provided a framework within which a leader's actions were limited. It is likely in such a structure that there will be low risk and familiar territory. Where there is great change Banach and Lorenzo (1993) recognise that, '*In a sea of uncertainty, leaders search first for things they can hang on to*' (p.29). The placing of these attributes in the top ten indicated a traditional and limiting, hierarchical and insular view from the principals. Busher and Saran (1994) offered another view of the insularity of principals in their review of the leadership role of head teachers. They described schools as professionally staffed organisations, just like colleges, and stated that,

*"In professionally led organisations leaders usually share their follower's professional culture, making leaders and followers reluctant to alter working practices which they perceive as entirely appropriate for providing a high quality service, whatever may be the shifting demands of a changing environment"* (p.11).

The corporation members on the other hand have a more modern and almost, as far as FE colleges are concerned, radical approach to leadership attributes by placing *communication, ability to provide strategic vision, working with a team, and ability to gain the confidence of the college community and the commitment of staff* in their top ten priorities. This defines a transformational leader who would be responsible for leading change at a time of change. The literature and, to some limited extent the survey, identified women leaders as having a transformational approach. There has been a great increase in the number of women principals in FE in the last four years and further research might show whether the requirements of corporations are best met by the leadership attributes of women. Handy (1996), when discussing the role of leaders for the millennium, suggested that, '*...it would be a tough task and would demand an unusual combination of attributes*' (p.8). Whether any of the groups in the study have that combination will be known in the future performance of them and their colleges.

The future will be different according to the current Labour Government and to that end it is endeavouring to promote the 'Third Way' (Giddens, 1998, p.vii) with its emphasis on co-operation, inclusion and public and private partnerships. There is little evidence that principals or corporations have stressed the attributes needed to attain this, although corporation members have *working with a team* high in their priority list. Working with teams indicates a preference for collaboration and a more democratic approach to leadership.

This approach is strongly advocated by Whitaker (1998) who argues that:

*"In order to bring about a significant shift from individualism to collaboration, notions of leadership need to be rethought and new definitions agreed. Leadership can no longer continue only to be associated with the roles and responsibilities of senior members of management teams. The whole staff needs to be seen as the management team, and leadership as the set of skills and qualities that can emerge at any level to move things forward" (p.155).*

Such a democratic approach is seen as important by Giddens (1998) who offers the thoughts that in order to achieve the third way, *'Most governments still have a good deal to learn from business best practice - for instance ...flexible decision structures and increased employee participation'* (p.74-75).

Evidence of this best practice being in colleges would have required different attributes in the top ten or different descriptors for the attributes. The study, which is the subject of this paper has shown that leadership by principals in further education continues to be traditional and transactional. The leadership provided by a principal is based on his/her personal attributes and not on the leadership potential of the people across the organisation. They are clearly concerned with structure and individuals; factors that pertain to management rather than leadership. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century requires leadership that recognises the importance of working with everyone in the organisation and with each being given the opportunity to play a leadership role. These elements need to be recognised by college corporations and should be shared with their current principals and applied clearly when seeking a new principal. They should also recognise along with Rouche et al (1990) that, *'leadership is greater than the sum of its parts - that it is the catalyst helping colleges forge ahead in the face of great adversity, challenge the status quo, and inspire great performance from those who collectively seek to move students toward success'* (p.189).

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## **Appendix 1**

The questionnaire that was sent to college principals. This article is based on the 111 completed and returned.

### **Leadership Survey**

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the leadership style and leadership approaches of Principals/Chief Executives of Colleges of Further Education. The questionnaire is in three parts:

- a) prioritising the leadership attributes by placing the appropriate number in the box on the left-hand side (1 is first priority, 2 is second priority etc);
- b) rating the leadership statements by circling the appropriate response in the box on the right:- SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (No Opinion), D (Disagree), SD (Strongly Disagree);
- c) a brief demographic questionnaire.

**TABLE 1**

**A Principal should:**

<b>PRIORITY (1-7)</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>				
	clearly set out strategies for the management of change	SA	A	N	D	SD
	show an anticipation of future change	SA	A	N	D	SD
	paint a clear picture of future change	SA	A	N	D	SD
	have a willingness to change direction in response to market need	SA	A	N	D	SD
	create systems that will recognise future challenges and opportunities	SA	A	N	D	SD
	ensure the organisation of the college will meet future challenges	SA	A	N	D	SD
	build up an information network to recognise what the future may hold	SA	A	N	D	SD

**Any other comments?**

**TABLE 2**

**The Principal of a college should:**

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>				
	define clearly the management structure of the college	SA	A	N	D	SD
	have clear recognisable views on how the college should be managed	SA	A	N	D	SD
	have obvious views on how to work with colleagues	SA	A	N	D	SD
	be an active team player	SA	A	N	D	SD
	be seen as a hard-working and dynamic individual	SA	A	N	D	SD
	show an understanding of the external working environment of the college	SA	A	N	D	SD

**Any other comments?**

**TABLE 3**

**A Principal should:**

<b>PRIORITY (1-7)</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>				
	build a well organised administration	SA	A	N	D	SD
	seek an organisation that is responsive to customer need	SA	A	N	D	SD
	ensure that the role of subordinates are clearly defined	SA	A	N	D	SD
	employ staff who have high levels of interpersonal skills	SA	A	N	D	SD
	encourage creative skills in all staff	SA	A	N	D	SD
	take responsibility for the errors of colleagues	SA	A	N	D	SD

**Any other comments?**

**TABLE 4**

**The Principal of a college should:**

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>				
	rely on a team approach to management	SA	A	N	D	SD
	have professional, subject discipline or technical expertise	SA	A	N	D	SD
	see the importance of using this personal expertise within their overall management strategy	SA	A	N	D	SD
	have a high level of presentation skills	SA	A	N	D	SD
	encourage response to needs as they arise	SA	A	N	D	SD

**Any other comments?**

**TABLE 5****A Principal should:**

<b>PRIORITY (1-7)</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>				
	regularly review the college structure	SA	A	N	D	SD
	use the structure as the vehicle for pursuing policies	SA	A	N	D	SD
	recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the college	SA	A	N	D	SD
	enjoy working with and supporting colleagues	SA	A	N	D	SD
	work with rather than through individuals	SA	A	N	D	SD
	enable individuals to take ownership of the challenges facing them	SA	A	N	D	SD
	have considerable day to day contact with staff	SA	A	N	D	SD

**Any other comments?****TABLE 6****The Principal of a college should:**

<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP STATEMENTS</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTES</b>				
	be comfortable managing change	SA	A	N	D	SD
	have the ability to negotiate and renegotiate to reach agreement	SA	A	N	D	SD
	accept friction as a necessary attribute of change	SA	A	N	D	SD
	be able to distance oneself from day to day issues	SA	A	N	D	SD
	seek and receive regular feedback from colleagues	SA	A	N	D	SD
	value the feedback from colleagues	SA	A	N	D	SD
	be able to influence people to their own point of view	SA	A	N	D	SD

**Any other comments?**

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Age (Please Tick)

- 30 - 35
- 36 - 40
- 41 - 45
- 46 - 50
- 51 - 55
- 56 - 60
- 61 - 65

Gender (Please tick)

- Female
- Male

Total years in FE Management ....

Total years a Principal ....

#### Qualification(s) in Education

Please tick if have stated qualification

- Cert. Ed.
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Ph.D

#### Qualifications in Management

- CMS/DMS
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Ph.D

#### Other Qualification(s)

#### Subject

- HNC/HND  .....
- BSc  .....
- BA  .....
- Master's Degree  .....
- PhD  .....

## **Appendix 2**

The attributes listed in the order of the questionnaire:

A principal should:

1. Clearly set out strategies for the management of change
2. Show an anticipation of future change
3. Paint a clear picture of future change
4. Have a willingness to change direction in response to market need
5. Create systems that will recognise future challenges and opportunities
6. Ensure the organisation of the college will meet future challenges
7. Build up an information network to recognise what the future may hold
8. Define clearly the management structure of the college
9. Have clear recognisable views on how the college should be managed
10. Have obvious views on how to work with colleagues
11. Be an active team player
12. Be seen as a hard-working and dynamic individual
13. Show an understanding of the external working environment of the college
14. Build a well organised administration
15. Seek an organisation that is responsive to customer need
16. Ensure that the role of subordinates are clearly defined
17. Employ staff who have a high level of interpersonal skills
18. Encourage creative skills in all staff
19. Take responsibility for the errors of colleagues
20. Rely on a team approach to management
21. Have professional, subject discipline or technical expertise
22. See the importance of using this personal expertise within their overall management strategy
23. Have a high level of presentation skills
24. Encourage response to needs as they arise
25. Regularly review the college structure
26. Use the structure as the vehicle for pursuing policies
27. Recognise the strength and weaknesses of the college
28. Enjoy working with and supporting colleagues
29. Work with rather than through colleagues
30. Enable individuals to take ownership of the challenges facing them
31. Have considerable day to day contact with staff
32. Be comfortable managing change
33. Have the ability to negotiate and renegotiate to reach agreement
34. Accept friction as a necessary attribute of change
35. Be able to distance oneself from day to day issues
36. Seek and receive regular feedback from colleagues
37. Value the feedback from colleagues
38. Be able to influence people to their own point of view.

### Appendix 3

An example of the summary of the responses from principals from which conclusions were drawn.

#### The Attributes in Priority Order by Male and Female Principals

Attribute in number order of the questionnaire	Attribute in priority order male principals	Attribute in priority order female principals
1	15	15
2	27	27
3	9	30
4	6	5
5	1	6
6	8	9
7	37	1
8	30	12
9	32	4
10	36	13
11	20	7
12	4	2
13	13	37
14	2	18
15	17	36
16	11	28
17	5	32
18	28	14
19	12	23
20	29	20
21	23	17
22	18	8
23	14	25
24	16	16
25	33	38
26	10	26
27	7	10
28	24	11
29	3	24
30	25	3
31	35	22
32	34	21
33	38	33
34	26	34
35	31	35
36	19	29
37	22	31
38	21	19