Book review

Glanz, J (2002) *Finding your leadership style: A guide for educators* Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 216 pages including index
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Reviewer: Dr Tom Stehlik
School of Education
University of South Australia

In the preface to this text the author states: 'This book was written for prospective and practicing school supervisors, administrators, teachers and other educational leaders', and given that intent, the book does focus mainly on school settings. In addition, and perhaps not surprisingly, the case studies and 'scenarios' used to illustrate these settings are distinctly American; however there still may be something of interest here to educators outside of school settings and outside of the United States.

With an intended readership of practitioners, the book is structured as a 'how to' manual complete with focus questions for individual response and reflection in each chapter, and the actual premise of the entire work is based on two self-administered survey instruments included as appendices: 'Assessing your natural leadership qualities' and 'Assessing your natural leadership virtues'.

The titles of these 56-question true-or-false-answer instruments should give a clue to the tone of the book, which attempts to define, categorise and give examples of leadership qualities and virtues (or 'excellences'), then goes on to suggest ways in which these can be developed, or 'actualized' as the author puts it. Glanz has adapted previous work on personality types to come up with seven leadership qualities:

- Adaptive assertive

- Creative assertive

- Adaptive supportive

- Dynamic assertive

- Dynamic supportive

- Dynamic aggressive

- Adaptive aggressive

and seven corresponding leadership virtues:

- Courage

- Impartiality

- Empathy

- Judgment

- Enthusiasm

- Humility

- Imagination

The author instructs the reader to complete the two surveys before reading the introduction and the rest of the book, which this reviewer duly did. According to the book, my leadership quality is 'Creative Assertive' and my leadership virtue is 'Impartiality'. The creative and impartial bit makes sense, but I am definitely not the assertive type, so when turning to the chapter devoted to this leadership quality, I was interested in finding out what this means in practice.

Disappointingly, apart from telling me that I am a right-brain thinker and may display 'unpredictable behaviour', the chapter consists mainly of vignettes in which stereotyped teachers behave in ways that predictably display this leadership quality, eg 'Karem Mohammed is working late one hot summer evening…'. The description of the scene that follows spells out to the reader that as a Creative Assertive Mohammed '…is a visionary…is naturally creative and imaginative…displays sensitivity and caring…' etc. The focus questions then ask things like 'What are the Creative Assertive qualities that Mohammed exhibited?' All too easy – just slot in the key words. And so it goes, with the other chapters following the same pattern to explain and illustrate the other qualities and virtues.

This linear join-the-dots approach based on fictitious stereotypes is OK if that suits your learning preference, but maybe the reader needs to complete a learning style inventory before even picking up this book to see if it is going to be of any use or interest. For those who believe that qualities can be quantified by a numerical score generated by a true-or-false survey questionnaire, this text may be of help in providing a model and a framework for understanding not only their only leadership style but those of people that they work or live with. However, while Glanz does acknowledge that 'leadership does not occur in a vacuum', and 'leadership quality depends on the context', the way the book is constructed leaves the reader with the impression that they are fixed in one Natural Leadership Quality (N.L.Q.) regardless of the setting or situation. A truly reflective educational practitioner may be able to make use of this information as part of an ongoing and multi-level process of professional development; but considered on its own, like most personality type inventories, a circumspect approach is recommended.