Lecture Title: Middle Leaders as preparation for senior leadership

21 ACADEMY

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From Single to Distributed School Leadership

- "There is too much to be done in terms of leadership and management for it to be the preserve of one person" (Irvine and Brundrett; 2016)

- The last two decades have seen constant policy changes that intensified the workload of a Head of school:
  - Changes to better the quality of education provision.
  - To cater for the social and international dimension.
  - Strategies for innovation
  - Support the individual student

- Authorities are expecting more and more of school heads and of teachers in their attempts to introduce change and implement the national curricula. (Bezzina 2013)

- All this has led to a shift from:

Single leadership   ⟶   Distributed leadership

Achieving a goal through a team (Kahl 2004)

Whereas the head of school was previously considered as leading single-handedly, with the increase of responsibilities, work has largely been resolved through distributing leadership demands between a *senior leadership team.*

Purpose and Position of an Ass. Head

- There is an emerging demand for learning arrangements to better meet individual needs through collaborative forces.

- The senior leadership team is expected to not only put these measures into practice, but also to achieve them through *seamless collaboration* and *communication* between all stakeholders.

Role of Ass. Head

Operational role

Strategic role
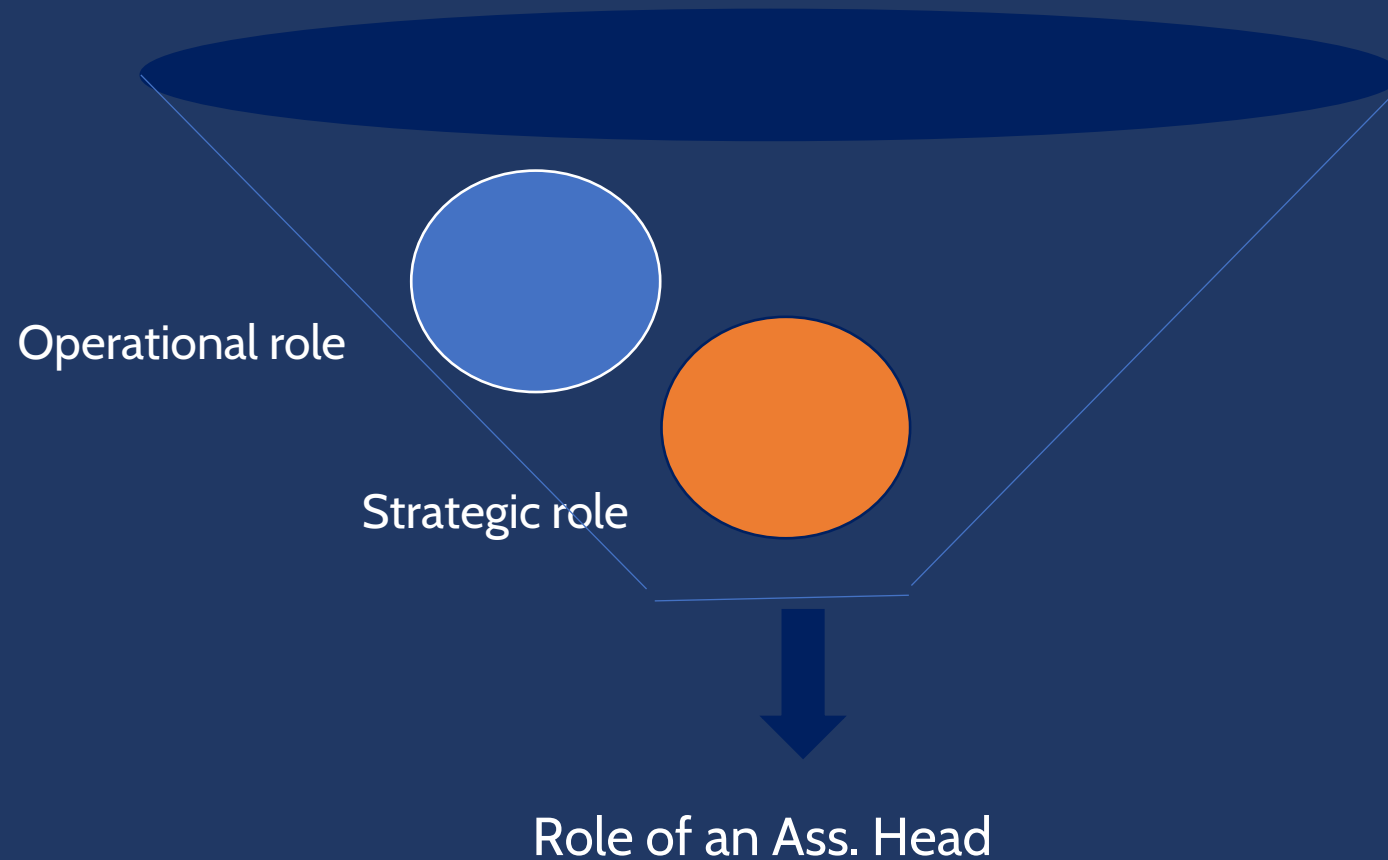
Role of an Ass. Head

- The purpose and position of an ass. Head is to be 'efficient in the management of the human, physical and financial resources of the school, and also'effective in offering professional leadership in the implementation and development of the national Curriculum Framework. (Ministery of Education, 2007, p.34)

- " In no other position does one walk such a fine line between the maintenance and survival need of the school and the needs and demands of the students, teachers and principals" (Weller and Weller; 2000).

The Operational role

1. Clerical duties eg. Attendance

2. Organisational duties eg. Timetable

3. Student welfare responsibilities eg. Discipline and non-classroom activities

   This implies that although administrative and management duties may seem mundane, time-consuming and frustrating (as they reduce valuable time which could be dedicated to instructional leadership) operational tasks are vital for the smooth running of the school.

The Strategic role

Typical duties of strategic instructional leadership:

➢ designing the vision

➢ setting goals

➢ coaching and evaluating teachers

➢ creating the master schedule

➢ developing and managing curriculum

➢ communicating with stakeholders

➢ using data to make decisions

➢ facilitating professional development for teachers (Kaplan and Owings; 1999)

Ass. Heads are both managers as well as leaders, but the emphasis placed on the former and the latter is still heavily dependent on the leadership approach of the head of school and more so, on the intentional commitment of the individual assistant head.

Moving from manager to leader, requires commitment, time and a personal plan that includes core leadership competencies and self made opportunities to practise effective leadership (Weller and Weller; 2002)

Ass. Heads must demonstrate the intestinal fortitude to push themselves to create the professional environment they want (Fullan and Hargreaves; 1996)

Ass. Heads must make a conscious effort, plan and implement strategies to develop:

1. themselves as leaders

2. build positive relationships

3. remain focused on their higher purpose, which is leading for learning.

1. Develop Leadership competence, Character and confidence.

> ➢ Change must start from within and Ass. Heads need to view themselves as change agents, not keepers of the status quo (Porter; 1996)

> ➢ By focusing on the 'head' and 'heart' of their leadership, educational leaders can develop themselves to become "competent, confident individuals of character whose actions are consciously designed to achieve the end goal" (Nelson, 2016)

> ➢ The 'hand' of leadership, which refers to the decisions leaders take, is then taken in the light shed by the other two dimentions of leadership, namely the 'head' and the 'heart'.

2. Develop character traits required for leadership.

" A person can have the best training in the world, an incisive analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won't be a good leader" (Goleman, 1998)

" We have failed to understand the true meaning of leadership" because we tend to focus mainly on developing technical proficiency while disregarding the area of character. (Bezzina 2913)

" An inner edge that leaders must cultivate by working just as vigorously inside themselves as they do on the outside, material world of schooling" (Scerri, 2013).

3. Building Confidence.

"Many leaders have the knowledge but lack the courage to make decisions that can make a difference when challenges are encountered" (Kahl, 2004)

In order to be effective and to do what is best for the students and the school, school leaders need to have courage not to have a 'let sleeping dogs lie' attitude, but to take risks and to be steadfast in addressing issues.

Doing what is right and doing what is easy are not the same thing, and advises school leaders to free themselves "of the need to be liked by everyone" (Nelson 2016)

Navigating between being a leader and a peer involves knowing when to be a leader and when to be a peer (Bennet 2007)

However it is very difficult to simultaneously be a sounding board or confident for employees and still be responsible for their evaluation (Hartzell, 1995)

In order to avoid confrontation, Ass. Heads need to put all three leadership dimensions into practice (Sergiovanni, 2009)

1. Enhancing their leadership skills and knowledge through continued professional growth and constant evaluation (Weller and Weller, 2002)

2. Intentional reflection on action is critical for leaders in developing positive relationships and involving staff in decision-making to assist in the building of trust and acceptance of decisions (Pilgrim, 2015)

3. Understand when the team could be offered a choice and more responsibility, and when to intervene to support teachers so that high quality student learning is ensured (Pilgrim, 2015)

However:

INCREMENTAL

FOCUSED

STRATEGIC APPROACH

are always preferred (Sergiovanni (2001)

As schools are not just about teaching and learning, but fundamentally, they are about *relationships* which require time and attention to build, maintain and strengthen.

Building Positive Relationships

Underlying leader intentionality is a paradigm of:

➢ Leader-as-steward (DePree, 1989)

➢ Servant leadership (Sergiovanni 2005)

❑ The former and the latter leadership styles are similar in nature in that these leaders have a serve-first mindset focused on empowering and uplifting others to unlock potential and a sense of service

❑ They differ in that whereas *steward leadership* focuses on the leadership long-term goal of building a stronger team and obtaining better results, *servant leadership* focuses more on the identity and behaviour of the leader, whose main goal is to serve.

Developing effective communication

Effective communication skills are required:

- to achieve school goals,
- to foster productive relationships,
- to gain credibility,
- to create a sense of community,
- to minimise conflict
- facilitate problem solving.   (Fullan, 2002)

- Types of communication:

One-way communication: timely and accurate   information about events, issues, problems, policies or   change (Yukl,1994)

Open communication: cooperative, reciprocal process wherein ideas and messages are shared through exchange between sender and receiver (Weller and Weller, 2002)

- Educational leaders should replace the term 'communication' with 'conversation'.

  ▪   communication involves a one-way transmission of information from one person to another.

    ▪ *Communication* are more an exchange of ideas (Sergiovanni 2005)
    ▪ Effective *conversation* requires that ideas shared are respected and given their due consideration.
    ▪ School need to extend inside-the-school conversation to the students' homes in order to explore ways in which the school and home may work closer together to maximise student learning.

Fostering good relationship with parents

The National Children's Policy (2017)

National Curriculum Framework (2012)

The mission of the Learning Outcomes Framework (2007 2013)

➢ Imply that school leadership cannot view the school in isolation from students' home

➢ Leaders are responsible for building partnership between school and home and states that "school leaders must take the first step to foster strong relationship with the community (Mapp and Hong (2010)

➢ Educational leaders such as Ass. Heads, need to be 'community equity literate'

Care ethic.

Ciulla (2009) defines 'care' as "attention and emotional concern about the well-being of others". This requires from leaders "honesty, fairness, and equity in all interpersonal activities, and respecting the dignity, diversity and rights of individuals and groups of people (Knights, 2018)

In ethical caring for personnel, ass. heads are called to have a personal knowledge of each member of staff and to truly value them for who they are in order to help them be better at their job. A way leaders look after their personnel (Noddings, 2012)

Earning trust

Ass. Heads acquire trust when they exercise 'authentic leadership', that is leadership that demonstrates:

➢ transparent decision making

➢Confidence

➢Optimism

➢Resilience

➢Consistency between words and deeds (Leithwood et al., 2006).

Followers trust leaders whose acts are predictable and whose values and beliefs are the norm of the organisation (Weller & Weller, 2002)

Intentional visibility

Instructional leaders 2are visible throughout the building, in classrooms, in the hall and at curricular events".

Educational leaders need, to reach out to students, staff and community members by leading visibly (Bezzina, 2013)

Management-by-walking around to diagnose problems impeding effective instruction and continually investigating new, better ways to improve the teaching and learning process (Weller & Weller, 2002)

Enhancing instruction through observations, professional development and mentoring

1. Teacher Support Function

2. Mentoring and Evaluative function

A thorough knowledge of educational leaderdship

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Sharing leadership and building a community of practice

- Getting the best out of people
- Achieving results through others in the essence of leadership
- Recognition and pooling of all expertise available within the organisation as 'multi-level leadership'
- Encourages collaborative engagement as opposed to teachers working in isolation.

Effective leadership requires an intelligent head with an intelligent heart (Day, 2000)

These leaders escape impersonal and bureaucratic relationships in favour of conversation and a caring ethic to develop personal relationships within the learning community