

Middle Manager Or Middle Leader?

Aims:

Middle Leaders contribute significantly to the success of the school and to the progress of individual pupils. These training materials aim to support you to build your own leadership capacity, or help others to develop as middle leaders by delivering a training session which addresses the fundamental differences between management & leadership in the context of a middle leader.

As such, **the aims of these training materials are:**

- To understand the importance of middle leaders to school improvement
- To be clear about the role of the middle leader, including the difference between leadership and management
- To be able to analyse your own strengths and weaknesses, and identify areas for development

Resources you will need:

- Powerpoint presentation & notes pages;
- Card sort - What Does A Curriculum Leader Do?
- What Is Subject Leadership activity sheet;
- Subject Leadership National Standards summary sheet

Starter Activity:

- What does a curriculum leader do cards.

Discuss should focus on the wide ranging roles of a curriculum leader. Traditionally, a head of department was an experienced teacher who had taken on the administration and running of a department. The plenary should emphasise the leadership role of a curriculum **leader**, with emphasis on vision and the importance of the role to raising standards. It may well be that you wish to extend the discussion to include issues such as the relationship with whole school development, relationships with senior leadership and the role of a curriculum leader in the wider geographical community.

Head of Geography Appointment Activity:

- Powerpoint slides;
- What Is Subject Leadership activity sheet;
- Subject Leadership National Standards summary sheet

Following on from the starter task, use slides 5 & 6 to develop understanding of the nature of leadership. Slide 5 considers the importance of culture to leading a team; successful teams have clear values, vision of what they are going to achieve based on these underpinning values, and they deliver visible results. Slide 6 builds on the idea of visible results & raises the issue of self evaluation. At this stage, raising awareness of the importance of self evaluation to middle leadership should be sufficient.

What Is Subject Leadership? Either individually or in pairs discuss & complete the What Is Subject Leadership Activity. The National Standards for Subject Leaders were produced by the TTA in 1998, and still provide a useful framework for considering the elements and purpose of the role of a curriculum leader. The summary of the standards can be distributed after the activity and provides some context for the interview task. The DCSF is consulting on a new framework of standards for school leaders > this can be found at <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/publications-index/publications-national-standards-consultation.htm>

The interview schedule task: This task should promote discussion of the key features and characteristics of a middle leadership role. By using the headings of teaching, learning, management of change, and resources, colleagues should first of all focus on how these relate to the role of Head of Department, and then develop a series of questions.

Alternatively, if you are leading a training session for colleagues, you could allocate a theme to each group.

The plenary discussion could use slides 8 -13 as a focus on how the style of questions has changed to reflect the changing role of a Head of Department from that of middle manager to middle leader. Slide 14 provides a useful summary of the differences between administration, management & leadership.

Slide 15 provides a simple summary of the role of a middle leader from the NCSL document “The Heart Of The Matter”. This is a very helpful guide, providing practical advice and strategies. It can be downloaded from:

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media-7b5-82-heart-of-the-matter.pdf>

Plenary Activity:

- The Middle Leader Must.... plenary cards;

One of the cards is given to each pair of colleagues. They should then reflect on what they or their department currently do, and suggest ways forward to strengthen that aspect of middle leadership.

Through your discussion emphasise the relevance of these and the impact they have on teaching & learning. Remember: The core purpose of the subject leader is to provide professional leadership which secures good quality teaching and improved standards for all pupils.

Ready For More.....Follow-up Activity:

- The Middle Leader Setting My Compass activity;

Reflect on the session & complete a traffic light evaluation of your current practice; do provide evidence for your thoughts. This activity should focus your professional development & provide areas for development within your curriculum area. Many people have found it useful to identify a positive, energising mentor with whom to discuss these issues – a great mentor will give you freedom, and you will never forget a great mentor!.