

Extracts from Harris 'Effective Subject Leadership' (1999)

Leadership

A recent research study into effective leadership funded by the National Association for Headteachers (Day *et al* 1999) found that the quality of leadership is dependent upon a number of factors:

- The leader's values and beliefs;
- The leader's vision and purpose;
- The leader's confidence in the staff involved;
- The leader's personality and style;
- The leader's need for control.

The importance of the core personal values was identified by the study as being centrally important in shaping the leadership style. The link between personal ideology and professional practice was considered to be an important dimension of effective leadership in the majority of schools in the study. In addition, creating a vision for the future development of the school was viewed as important and essentially a collaborative activity. This involved dialogue right across the school and included a critical examination of the vision and direction of the school.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) regard vision building as part of a collaborative culture where each member of the department has the opportunity to present their views and ideas. Effective departments not only tolerate differences of opinion, but build upon differences to create new understandings. It is the subject leaders' role to foster and develop a shared sense of purpose within the department and to ensure that the departmental members are all working towards the same set of goals. At a simple level, the subject leader needs to have a vision of how things could be in the department. This sense of purpose and direction is particularly important for effective subject leadership.

Although subject leaders have their own vision of departmental development, they will also have a key role to play in developing and implementing the head's vision for the school. This will require conveying the head's vision to staff, involving them in developing the vision and converting it into every-day practice. Part of the subject leader's contribution is through the specific vision that they have of their own departmental area. The purpose of the vision may be to convey values, to provide a baseline for development or to mobilise others into action.

As a subject leader, there will be a need to balance accountability, authority and responsibility. The subject leader will be held responsible for the work of his or her department by those within it and outside it. This external and internal accountability places a particular tension upon the subject leader, and demands a leadership style that involves both the support and challenge of others.

In addition, skilful and imaginative leadership is central to managing strategy implementation. In the first instance, middle managers are expected to think and act strategically in relation to their own area of responsibility. But they have an equally important role to play in relation to the development and well-being of the organisation as a whole. From the organisational point of view, the effective subject leader is someone who takes account of the long-term interests of the school as well as the more immediate interests of his or her subject or curriculum area.

Effective leadership essentially involves guiding and supporting staff, particularly those who are having difficulties. This support will vary depending upon the circumstance, but the need for a collaborative culture has been shown to be crucially important in effective departmental working (Harris *et al* 1995, 1996). This need for support, as noted earlier, has to be balanced by challenging aspects of departmental working that are not working most effectively. Subject leaders need to set clear but achievable targets for colleagues within their department. Establishing intellectually challenging tasks for departmental members is a key role and responsibility for effective subject leaders. In an improving school context, teacher development has been shown to be critically important, hence the subject leader has an important role to play in developing others. An effective subject leader will develop and nurture a supportive team.

Leadership from the middle is a complex task, not least because there are a number of competing tensions. A main tension lies in the fact that subject leaders are also classroom teachers, and as such have a dual responsibility towards the pupils they teach and the teachers in their department. The time to manage is therefore an important constraint facing all subject leaders. By association, another tension is that of delegation. The subject leaders will have to judge how much to delegate to departmental members and how much to retain under their control. This will be a judgement that will have a direct impact upon the subject leader's management of time.

Time management

The role of subject leader in a secondary school is certain to raise a number of issues concerning time management. Demands will be placed upon the subject leader from a variety of directions and there will be a wide-ranging set of tasks that subject leaders face. In reality, the subject leader is constantly dealing with time that is interrupted. Planning time is divided into teaching periods during the day where tasks have to be left in order to teach. In addition, the work has to be managed within a limited amount of time. Consequently, time management is a very important skill for subject leaders.

Time management is essentially concerned with managing tasks efficiently and effectively. Where this does not occur, stress, burnout and overload result. Much of the management literature suggests that more efficient ways of working solve all problems. However, it has been shown that middle managers are in positions where there is just not enough time to undertake all the tasks that are necessary to complete (Earley and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). Consequently, subject leaders might need to employ quite rigid time management approaches in order to be most effective.

Time management is concerned with being organised by setting clear priorities and working in the most time efficient ways. Subject leaders may adopt a number of different strategies to assist them in coping with a challenging job. The most obvious of these is to spend more and more time at school in order to get the job done. Kyriacou (1991) has responded on the stress caused by such a response to the pressure upon teachers' time. However, spending longer at work and working at the weekends has a direct correlation to feelings of stress and inability to cope with the job in hand (Handy 1998). In this respect, it may prove a counter-productive way of managing workload.

Much of the writing concerned with time management is premised on the belief that greater efficiency is the solution to all problems. While this might not be strictly true in all cases, there are some time management strategies that subject leaders can adopt which can assist in dividing up time more effectively. First, planning is an important component in effective time management. As noted earlier, subject leaders have an important role to play in strategic planning at whole-school level. However, the planning that is necessary at departmental level is more to ensure effective maintenance of the department rather than planning for development or improvement.

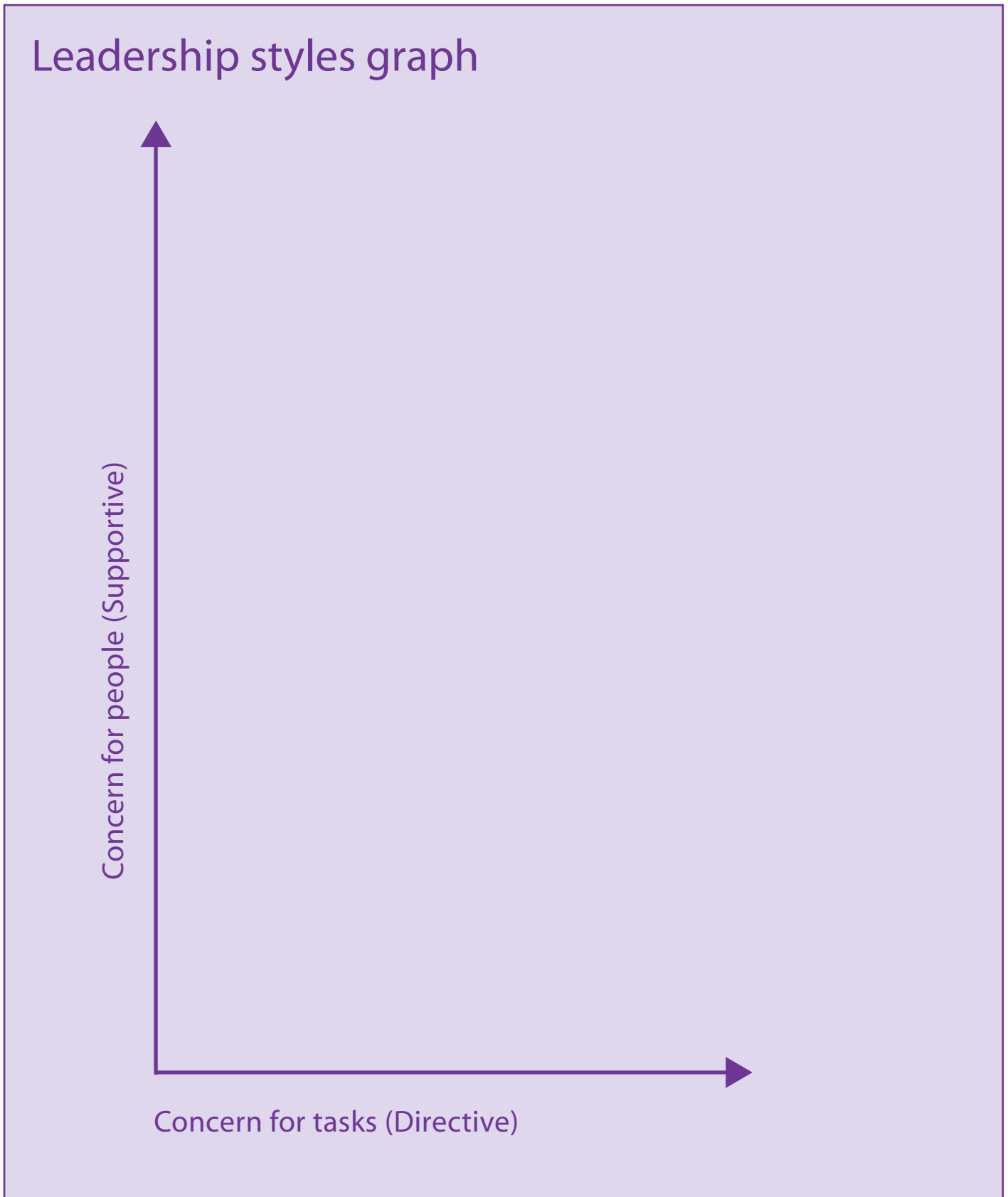
Interpersonal relationships

The management of time is intrinsically bound up with the management of others. One of the most important aspects about the delegation and decision-making process is that subject leaders have to manage their own feelings and the feelings of others. In this respect the effective subject leader needs to be aware of the feelings associated with decisions taken or tasks delegated. The process of delegation is not without anxiety and stress, particular when the subject leader is taking a risk by delegating to others. Consequently, knowing personal strengths and weaknesses is an important first step in effective subject leadership.

A great deal of the way managers feel about their actions is caught up with expectations of themselves and others. The subject leader who sets high personal expectations will automatically have high expectations of others. Similarly, a subject leader who is relaxed about deadlines and timescales will find it difficult to relate to departmental members who like to work to tight timescales. In addition, the position of the subject leader will mean that they will have a complicated set of interpersonal relationships to deal with inside the school. On the one hand they are directly accountable to the senior management team and managed by them, and on the other they have departmental members accountable to them and have responsibility for managing them as a team. Hence the interpersonal balance is more difficult for the subject leader than for other positions of responsibility within the school.

It is important, therefore, that the subject leader sets clear parameters within which to work with others. Subject leaders have to develop effective negotiating skills to assist them in offsetting competing demands upon their time. They will need to ensure that all intrusions on their time have an agreed time limit, purpose and agenda. The subject leader needs to manage their time by managing others. Rejecting ideas from departmental members can often cause resentment and, consequently, needs to be handled sensitively by the subject leader. In this respect, managing a subject is centrally about managing self and managing self and others.

As an individual, consider the leadership styles graph below, contrasting concern with people with concern for tasks. Decide where you would place yourself as a subject leader.



In small groups consider the four leadership styles outlined in the situational leadership chart and write down an example of the type of situation that demands different types of leadership using the proformas provided (Handout 13d).

Situational leadership styles	
Style 1: Directing – high directive / low supportive	
· Decisive	Direction from the leader
· Directing	Leader uses one-way communication
· Determined	Leader defines role of followers
· Forceful	Leader says when, where, how and who is to do it
Style 2: Guiding – high directive / high supportive	
· Adaptable	Most direction still from leader
· Energetic	Leader allows some two-way communication
· Interactive	Leader gets followers to buy decisions
· Involving	Leader gives some emotional support
Style 3: Supporting – high supportive / low directive	
· Appreciative	Leader shares decision making with followers
· Considerate	Leader gives much support
· Encouraging	Leader does not give structure
· Patient	Structure comes from followers
· Supportive	Leader gives much support
Style 4: Delegating – low supportive / low directive	
· Analytical	Leader allows followers to run their own show
· Delegating	Support comes from the group itself
· Deliberate	Leader is available for group if needed

Summary: the four leadership styles

	Used properly	Used improperly
Style 1	Directing	Dictating
Style 2	Guiding	Smothering
Style 3	Supporting	Rescuing
Style 4	Delegating	Abdicating

NB these styles are only effective if they are used properly.

Acknowledgement – Adapted from Harris, A. (1999)

Leadership Styles: proforma

Concern with relationships Supportive	Style 3: Supporting	Style 2: Guiding
	Style 4: Delegating	Style 1: Directing
	Concern with tasks Directive	

Leadership and Management: What is the Difference?

Geoff Southworth, 2003

This question has prompted much debate. Indeed, there is probably more heat generated by this question than illumination.

Some argue that leadership is part of management, others, that the two are separate. My view is that the two are distinctively different but that they also overlap.

Management, it seems to me, is about ensuring that the school as an organisation works efficiently and effectively. All who work in the school know what their jobs are, know who they work with, what they are responsible for and have the tools and resources to do it. Quite a bit of management involves timetables, schedules and communication. It also involves resources. Making sure that there are pencils and paper, as well as staples for the staple-gun, tack for displays and that the photocopier works are as important as who is on playground duty or organising after school sports activities.

Essentially management is about ensuring that the school as an organisation runs smoothly.

Leadership is more than this.

Leadership is about ensuring the school runs somewhere.

If we think about what it means to lead – that is, think of it as a verb, not a noun, then it is usually about moving. Movement is a key part of leadership. Leaders play a part in helping to set direction as well as reminding us of the direction we agreed or consented to take and work towards. This sense of direction and moving forwards implies that leadership is about change. Given we live and work in changing times and environments, school leadership is centrally concerned with leading schools forward and into the future. That means leading change.

Moreover, if leadership is about helping the school to move forward, then that means not just going anywhere but going towards something better. Movement is usually associated with going forward – no-one talks about leading a school backwards! Today, movement must be improvement. Thus school leadership is about improving the school.

If this distinguishes between the two concepts, there is something else to add about leadership. When we think of leadership we think of leaders and their followers – the groups they lead. Leadership is thus a social activity in which you as a leader try to persuade others to come with you. Leadership is therefore a process of social influence.

Management involves working with people too, but managers usually ensure things happen and keep on happening. They are less concerned with change than with continuity.

Leadership is about development; management is about maintenance.

Another way of contrasting leadership and management is to say that managers do things right; leaders do the right things. This cliché highlights that leadership involves values – what are the right things to do in the school, at this time and for the future? Managers, on the other hand, might be more concerned with ensuring the correct procedures are followed.

If these thoughts help to differentiate between the two concepts, it should also be acknowledged that they go hand in hand. Successful and effective headteachers do both – they manage and lead. Nor are these two activities conducted in equal measure. All the evidence from observational studies of people at work in

organisations – schools and other kinds of organisations – shows that more time is devoted to management than to leadership. The critical issue is, when there is some time to lead, what do you use it for?

Summary

- Management is about ensuring the school runs smoothly.
- Leadership is about enabling the school to run somewhere.
- Leadership is about development; management is about maintenance.
- Leadership involves influencing colleagues to move forward together.
- Schools need both leadership and management.
- The two are not exercised in equal measure.

OFSTED DEFINITIONS

Leadership

- Creating a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school's relentless focus on pupils' achievement.
- Strategic planning reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals.
- Leaders inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils.
- Creation of effective teams.
- Knowledgeable and innovative leadership of teaching and the curriculum.
- Commitment to running an equitable and inclusive school, in which each individual matters.
- Provide good role models for other staff and pupils.

Management

- The school undertakes rigorous self-evaluation and uses findings effectively.
- Monitoring performance data, reviews patterns and takes appropriate action.
- Performance management of staff, including support staff, is thorough and effective in bringing about school improvement.
- Commitment to staff development is reflected in effective induction and professional development strategies.
- Recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff and support staff are well deployed to make teachers' work more effective.
- Approaches to financial and resource management help the school to achieve educational priorities.
- The principles of best value are central to the school's management and use of resources.