

Sabbatical Report Term 2 2017

Janice Adamson

Victoria Avenue School



LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

Exploring the ways in which schools have structures and systems that support leading from the middle principles. How schools are tapping into leadership potential and using the leading from the middle principles to grow leadership capability. Finding out what commonalities are apparent between schools, and what structures are successful and what pitfalls have been overcome.

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Executive Summary

My original premise was to look at the ways in which schools are tapping into leadership potential and using leading from the middle principles to grow leadership capability.

It seems that most principals have taken the traditional hierarchical approach to leading from the middle and dispensed leadership roles arbitrarily based on the tradition middle leadership roles eg team leaders, curriculum leaders, usually for a predetermined length of time.

Middle leaders are appreciative of the opportunities for leadership but most report the tension between their teaching role and their leadership role, with the feeling that they are not doing either roles justice.

There is no difference between Auckland schools and regional schools. Middle leaders and principals have the same issues and the same tensions as Auckland middle leaders and principals.

One school is trialling a change to their leadership model from the hierarchical model (organisational) to that which is needs based (holistic). Already (one term in when interviewed) teachers who had not previously had leadership roles had stepped into teams based on their expertise or passions. The foundation for the strength of this model is that the principal puts a lot of professional learning, structures and resources into ensuring that collaborative practice is the norm.

In order for there to be effective middle leadership, a number of conditions need to be present: a shared school vision, a collaborative school culture, a well-documented strategic plan known by all, a scaffolded (capacity building) approach to developing leaders, sufficient resources (time, financial, personnel) to enable leadership roles to be undertaken, teams formed for a purpose rather than a period of time, role clarity, team members opt in based on expertise or passion and a managed workload.

Leading from the middle is about foregoing the hierarchical model of leadership. It is about engaging all the people in the organisation to collaborate for the common good of the organisation, with the end goal for schools being increased student engagement and achievement. For this model to be successful, it is essential that the conditions needed to ensure the success be present.

Focus

The terminology 'distributed leadership' dates back to the early 2000s and 'leading from the middle' is the current terminology. As schools form Communities of Learning, the term 'leading from the middle' has become a catch phrase. With the advent of the new career pathways through being a community of learning across school leader (ASL) or in school leader (ISL), the focus on the leadership roles of these middle leaders within existing school structures seems to be a conundrum that community of learning principals are grappling with.

I intend exploring the ways in which schools have structures and systems that support leading from the middle. I am interested in the ways in which schools are tapping into leadership potential and using the 'leading from the middle' principles to grow leadership capability. I am interested in the commonalities are between schools and what structures have been successful and what pitfalls have been overcome.

More importantly, I am going to look closely at the opportunities and barriers from middle leaders' perspectives. What are their needs in terms of professional development, board support, in school support? I will use the Educational Leadership Model as the springboard to frame questions.

Purpose

The purpose of this investigation is:

1. To undertake a review of current literature, current thinking, research and trends around leading from the middle.
2. To ascertain the level to which schools are actively and effectively embracing the leading from the middle principles.

3. To use the outcomes from reviewing current literature and speaking to principals and middle leaders in primary schools to compare and benchmark the leadership model at Victoria Avenue School with those schools where there is also an effective leadership model.
4. To review and improve the leading from the middle principles and model at Victoria Avenue School.

Methodology

Visits to Other Schools

Visit a number of schools in Auckland and Nelson. These schools have been chosen in order to get a broad view ie Auckland schools and regional schools. They also are across all the deciles.

Interviews

Discussions with principals and senior leaders. The purpose of the discussion is to elicit their definition of and explanation of the leadership structure at their school.

Interview middle leaders. The interviews will follow the format of 'informational interviewing' and all middle leaders will be asked the same questions.

The reason for undertaking the same interview process in Auckland and regional schools is to provide two perspectives which can then be compared in order to see if there is commonality of distributed leadership / leading from the middle structures in city and regional schools.

The purpose of the interviews is to provide not only information about the models of leadership in the school, but to also provide an opportunity for the 'stories' of the institution to be told. This is intended to provide a richness to the information gathering and will give an insight into the leadership culture within each school.

Literature Review

The literature review will look at New Zealand research and articles as well as a selection of international research which could have relevance to the New Zealand setting.

Reflection on Community of Learning Meetings

The richness of opinion about leading from the middle as espoused by the principals involved in the CoL will be touched on as part of the report.

Analysis of Interviews, Literature, Discussion

Interviews

The questions were chosen to elicit information about leadership roles in their schools, their understanding of leading from the middle (distributed leadership), the tension between their teaching role and their leadership role as well as an opportunity for them to reflect on any changes to education they might like.

Prior to the interviews with middle leaders, I had a general discussion/interview with principals about the leadership model in their school and how the leadership roles were established.

13 middle leaders were asked the following questions:

What is your leadership role in the school?

What do you think are the core responsibilities of leaders at your school?

What is the model for leadership opportunities in your school?

What do you know about the phrase 'leading from the middle?' (Distributed leadership)

You have a busy role as a teacher and a leader, can you identify any barriers that cause a tension between these two vital roles?

If it were a perfect education system, what would you like to see changed / put in place / taken away which would enable you to be the leader you want to be?

I analysed the responses looking for any themes across the schools.

Question: Core Responsibilities of Leaders

Across all schools there were differences as to how middle leaders perceived their core responsibilities. The themes that were apparent were:

- Management
- Focus on student achievement
- Acting as a go between
- Seeing to pastoral and behaviour needs of teachers and students
- Appraising, coaching, being a role model, guiding and supporting teachers
- Leading change
- Collaborating

Middle leaders predominantly saw their role as appraising, coaching, guiding and being a role model for the teachers in their teams. Most middle leaders mentioned more than one area of responsibility but the predominant responsibility was in the development of teachers in their teams.

The next highest numbers of responses were around management and pastoral and behavioural care of students. Management responsibilities included job descriptions for roles, compliance, day to day tasks, ensuring day to day practices were going well.

Further responsibilities not mentioned as much as the previous two were around student achievement, leading change and acting as a go between. Four respondents mentioned overseeing and tracking student achievement being one of their core responsibilities and three respondents said that one of their responsibilities was being the go between - between senior managers/principal and class teachers or between teachers in their teams.

Only three respondents said that one of their core responsibilities was leading change. Their responses included 'new initiatives promoted with my team', 'initiate change initiatives' and 'helping lead change, either from the top or from us as a collective'.

Two respondents said that one of their core responsibilities was around collaboration. These responses indicated collaboration with the management team or collaboration within their teams.

Thoughts

The themes from this question about core responsibilities showed that managing teams tended to be at the forefront of middle leaders' perceptions of their roles. They focused on appraisals, coaching, mentoring which are all current initiatives that schools are upskilling in at the moment so it is not surprising that these were 'on top'.

Leading collaboration and leading change were not perceived by most of the middle leaders as a core responsibility of their role.

Question:
Model of Leadership
Opportunities

opportunities

Based on the responses, most of the middle leaders said that opportunities for leadership were readily available in their schools and that principals actively encouraged teachers to apply for these roles. There was a degree of enthusiasm in the way these were answered with middle leaders seeming pleased that there were these opportunities.

From my discussion with principals, some aligned the leadership roles with strategic direction but it seemed that most of the leadership roles offered were curriculum focussed eg leadership of PE, science, maths etc, which was for a period, usually one year. The roles were then offered again the following year. One principal talked of 'agile' leadership where teams were formed for a specific purpose, then dissolved once the purpose had been fulfilled. She talked about strengths based leadership which meant that teachers could take on leadership roles in their area of expertise but there was no expectation that this was for a specific period, but for a specific need or task.

None of the interviewed respondents, nor any of the principals, mentioned anything about professional support being given for teachers who took on leadership roles, although this was not specifically asked for in the question. The question asked for the model of leadership and all the respondents dealt with this question factually through sharing the opportunities for leadership. In hindsight the question could have been phrased a little differently in order to find out more detail other than opportunities. The one respondent who mentioned a pathway and gave the example of mentor teacher to associate teacher, said that there were lots of opportunities to take little steps if you wanted to. This was possibly more aligned to a model of leadership than some of the other responses.

Question: What do you understand about the phrase 'Leading from the Middle'?

3 respondents indicated that they had no idea what the phrase meant.

5 respondents said that leading from the middle meant that they were the middle ground between senior management and teachers, or that they bridged the gap between strategic thinking and the classroom role. They didn't articulate as to how they saw this role working.

4 respondents used the word 'collaboration' or valuing the expertise that everyone has.

I respondent said that it meant that the middle leader was the person on the ground that people could come up to; being involved in the day to day teaching so they had the power to have a group mentality - make a big impact because we are on the ground.

1 person said that leading from the middle was teachers being cohesive, and working together but in sync with leaders. The respondent recognised that they have the impact to help, model and lead change.

None of the respondents linked leading from the middle with distributed leadership. It did seem that the phrase has not necessarily become part of the common language of education.

ACCoL Meeting 13 March 2017

At this meeting of principals, the discussion around the roles of the in school leaders and across school leaders was discussed at some length. The notion of leading from the middle was at the centre of the discussion with a number of principals sharing their thoughts on how that worked at their school.

There was a range of approaches espoused. Two of the principals seemed unable to lose the locus of control with comments such as 'so they are making the decisions and telling us their decision'; 'we need to see a plan from them so we know what is going on'; 'they don't understand about budget requirements; they need to run their decisions past us so we agree to them'.

It seemed that a number of the principals saw their role as coaches, and were able to guide the in school leaders (ISLs) through questioning. Such questions as 'so how do you think you can make that work?'; 'what resourcing do you think might be needed?'

The discussion moved onto principals needing to have an 'annual plan' from ASLs so that there was some clarity around the purpose of their roles and what they planned to achieve during the year. There was discussion around ASLs not knowing how to craft an annual plan and the comment from one principal was 'so we just hold our hands up and say to them that they are leading from the middle, so you figure it out'. My response to that was that as a coach / leader of learning, it was my job to scaffold them into the new learning (ie about how to craft an annual plan) before they needed to use the skills. As leaders who are 'enabling' the ASLs and ISLs to make decisions about the way forward, we are not relinquishing control, but using our skills and expertise to guide, coach and teach this 'layer' of middle leaders so they learn.

Thoughts

There did not seem to be much role clarity as evidenced by the responses. Respondents seemed to focus on the word 'middle' as being the place between senior leaders and teachers.

It seems that there is a misconception that leading from the middle means that middle leaders, through their inquiries, decide what needs to be changed in a school and go ahead and start the process of change without principal involvement other than telling the principal about the need for change. Some principals expressed frustration about the 'leading from the middle' model, particularly around budgeting, allocating staff resources if they weren't kept in the loop about the changes designed by middle leaders.

If principals don't have clarity around the role of the middle leaders, then it is likely that middle leaders could perceive their roles as being about managing a team.

Question: Identify barriers and tensions between the 2 vital roles

Time was identified by most of the respondents. This variously referred to the following: too many meetings, no release time, scrambling to get everything done, lots of admin, need more release.

Some respondents said that it was a tension balancing time between the two roles, that it was a juggling act and they felt like they weren't giving either role their best. There was a tension between wanting to be a great leader and sharing things and even though they felt they were managing their time well there was always a lot to do in a day of teaching. As one respondent said, "there are so many jobs to get done you need to go 100pmh, have grit and prioritise."

Respondents said that they take on new leadership opportunities but nothing is taken away. Things don't drop off when new things are introduced and there was a feeling of having more and more piled on top of them.

A tension that a couple of respondents mentioned was the difficulty of getting everyone on board, of 'blockers' and one talked of the tension of having friends in their team but needing to address issues with someone who is a friend.

Thoughts

The feeling of not having enough time, of having more things piled on top and nothing taken away creates an interesting conundrum for principals. It may be the lack of clarity around a middle leader's role which creates the tension. Middle leaders on the one hand are enthusiastic that their principal offers middle leadership opportunities, but on the other hand they experience the tension between their teaching role and their leadership role which seems to be causing stress as indicated by the words 'scrambling', 'juggling act' and 'more and more piled on top'.

Question: Perfect education system - What would you like to see changed/put in place/taken away?

8 respondents indicated that having more time is needed - release time, time to keep up with changes in education, time to follow own and student passions, to observe in other classes/schools, for meetings and reflections. Alongside this, middle leaders said they wanted more time to fulfil their leadership roles but not at the expense of time spent in the classroom/teaching.

Funding is also an issue; for smaller classes, student support, infrastructure, for quick access to resources.

Some middle leaders wanted more opportunities for professional learning.

A couple of respondents talked about changing structures - of ERO, change structure to not have middle managers, less (sic) structures or pressure so that teachers have time to do other things.

Other comments included; less put on the shoulders of teachers, lots of policies, procedures, reports taking away from teaching time; be able to lead more change/be involved in change/forward planning; change age boys start school; change automatic right to move up each year; mainstreaming; take responsibility to get all students to the same national standard away so real learning is happening; need to let things go; overloaded with admin and enjoyment factor decreasing.

Thoughts

Whilst this question did not specifically relate to leading from the middle, it was included in order to gain a snapshot of what is on top for middle leaders. Interesting that lack of time again came up as a stressor, but that was countered by them not wanting to lead a team at the expense of time spent in the classroom.

Definition of Distributed Leadership / Leading From the Middle

Leading from the middle, distributed leadership, democratic leadership or shared leadership are different labels for familiar phenomena. In this discussion, I use the terms distributed leadership and leading from the middle interchangeably, but as labels for the same phenomena. The popularity of distributed leadership has something to do with the ease with which people can appropriate it to cover familiar approaches to leadership (Spillane, Sherer, 2004).

The obvious starting point when looking at leading from the middle is to start with a definition.

In his work in Canada with the Ontario reform strategy, Fullan defines it as: *a deliberate strategy that increases the capacity and internal coherence of the middle as it becomes a more effective partner upward to the state and downward to its schools and communities, in pursuit of greater system performance (Fullan 2015).*

He noted that it is not a standalone model, but rather a connected strategy. Top down leadership doesn't last due to difficulty in getting meaningful engagement from the bottom. He described the process of leading from the middle as: *Directional vision, letting go, and reining in.*

Spillane (2004) was reluctant to define distributed leadership, as his own understanding of distributed leadership had evolved and was continuing to evolve. In his paper A Distributed Perspective on School Leadership: Leadership Practice as *Stretched Over* People and Place he argued that it is leadership distributed in the interactive web of leaders, followers and situation.

Another definition of shared leadership is the practise of governing a school by expanding the number of people involved in making important decisions related to the school's organisation, operation and academics. In general, shared leadership entails the creation of leadership roles or decision making opportunities for teachers, staff members, students, parents and community members (Glossary of Education Reforms 2013).

Dr Alma Harris defined distributed leadership as, "primarily concerned with the practice of leadership rather than specific leadership roles or responsibilities. It equates with shared, collective and extended leadership practice that builds the capacity for change and improvement" (2014).

The Ministry of Education publication, *Leading From the Middle. Educational Leadership for Middle and Senior Leaders*, does not have a definition of leading from the middle. Instead it describes the roles and the special contribution that middle and senior leaders make towards improving educational and social outcomes for all students (2012).

Dr Howard Youngs said there was no one way of defining or describing 'distributed leadership' practice. "Leadership stretches over formal and informal aspects of an organisation and arises in-between or as a result of, the interactions that take place between individuals and/or groups" (2013).

None of these definitions encompasses or defines exactly what leading from the middle is. It seems, both through the literature and in my interactions with principals and middle leaders that the concept of leading from the middle is nebulous. It depends on the lens with which a particular organisation views leadership. Many of the definitions above are surface definitions and we need to look deeper in order to fully understand what conditions need to be present in order for there to be authentic leadership happening. As Harris said, "In very practical terms, to be most effective, distributed leadership has to be carefully planned and deliberately orchestrated. It won't just happen and if it does, there is no guarantee that it will have any positive impact. Letting a thousand flowers bloom is not distributed leadership" (2014).

Dr Howard Youngs, in his presentation to ILA Oceania Conference (2013) said, "unfortunately, distributed leadership has become a slippery and elastic concept, loosely used by many (Hartley, 2007; Torrance, 2009). It lacks a critical conceptualisation" (2009).

If we have difficulty pin pointing a definition, then perhaps it is better to look at the purpose of distributing leadership or leading from the middle. If schools are always looking for continuous improvement, then change, as identified through school wide or individual teacher inquiry, needs to be fully embedded in order for the change to be effective. Fullan said, "the goal is to strengthen the focus of the middle in relation to system goals and needs. Thus it is not a standalone, but rather a connected strategy. It liberates a greater mass of people to become engaged in purposeful system change and ultimately to own the changes they create together" (2015).

It appears that principals understand that distributed leadership is a sharing of leadership roles across the staff, but the deeper understanding of the role of a middle leader and the conditions that need to be present in order for this to be effective is the missing link. Having effective middle leaders is not just distributing the roles, but needs a lot of scaffolding and structure to be present in order for the middle leaders to fully understand and therefore be effective in their roles.

Thoughts

There is currently a lot of misinformation about leading from the middle. The most common one I have come across is that the middle leaders identify, define and lead change without any strategic direction driving change. This is not the case. Like all change initiatives there has to be a strategic intent, be evidenced based and focussed on identified needs relating to student achievement.

Role Tensions

One of the overarching questions I have about the principle of leading from the middle is around the tension created (either intrinsically or extrinsically) around being a classroom teacher and being a middle leader and the feeling that neither role is being done effectively.

In analysing the responses from the middle leaders' interviews, there was enthusiasm expressed by a number of them that the principal provided opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles. The same people also talked of the tension between their teaching roles and their leadership roles. Lack of time was an issue and the talk was about management, not leadership. Leading collaboration and leading change were not perceived by most of the middle leaders as a core responsibility of their role.

The interviews with middle leaders showed that whilst middle leaders were very happy that their principal disseminated leadership opportunities, there was considerable tension between teaching and leading roles. Most middle leaders tended not to see their roles as leadership roles, but as either as a go between role or a managerial role. There was no discussion about inquiry, no discussion around the strategic direction of the school driving their roles, nor was there any discussion around collaboration. There was no mention of professional development in leadership. Middle leaders who were tasked with leading curriculum areas planned and led professional development in their schools. It might be that this was needs based but there was no discussion about this.

Youngs (2017), in his role as senior lecturer, educational leadership, School of Education, AUT states that anecdotally and increasingly he has teachers telling him that they are working beyond their capacity to sustain external and internal expectations for improvement. Youngs went on to exercise caution by saying that it is teachers who make a difference with a student, not the latest initiative or inquiry nor prescribed standards or innovative learning environments and Communities of Learning. These may help but may also add to teachers' workloads so those leaders who make decisions need to exercise wisdom.

This was noted as a theme from the interviews. Lack of time was the most frequent response, along with managing time between two roles. The feeling of having two key roles in the school but not doing either justice. The tension between being a great teacher and an effective leader.

Thoughts

We need to work collaboratively with our teachers and address the overload head on. If we continue to expect teachers to want to take up leadership opportunities, we need to address workload. Interestingly, it was not more money that was seen as a driver, but more time. If we are to enable our middle leaders, we need to look at how we resource staffing and enable conditions that support teacher and leader development. What initiatives and strategies can we put in place to allow teachers to feel they are doing both roles effectively?

Organisation of Leadership Model

Are schools really allowing middle leaders to lead change effectively? Are principals allowing the conditions within the organisation, to develop the leadership capability, not just through providing

the opportunities for leadership, but in providing scaffolding in order that middle leaders are truly able to lead effectively?

Youngs (2013) talked of the typologies of leadership distribution; organisational cluster and holistic cluster.

Organisational cluster: authorised; formal distribution; representational; planful alignment; classical where existing structures are used; aggregated

Holistic cluster: dispersed and democratic; opportunistic and cultural; emergent; spontaneous; autonomous

Youngs argued that there is a complexity to distributed leadership and that it can be orchestrated (organisational) as well as emergent (holistic).

From my interviews, it seems that most schools tended towards the organisational cluster. Examples of this are curriculum team leaders. One leader said that the curriculum team members were chosen by the principal. Some are placed there because they have skills in that area and others because they need development in that area. Perhaps this reinforces my notion that middle/distributed leadership is not well understood and schools are using their current systems and structures to tie middle leadership into.

During my discussions with principals, there was one principal who has dispensed with the organisational cluster approach and embraced the holistic approach. She changed the structure and it seems that they work from a different notion of leading which is less about being organisational (or hierarchical) to holistic leadership which I would call 'just in time' leadership.

They defined the leadership 'work'. Their belief is that growing capacity is at the core of the leadership vision. They believe that collaboration is also at the core of their vision and they look a lot at who works best with whom. They have 'agile' leadership; the teams are not decided on and then kept together for a determinate period of time (ie a year). The teams are formed when there is an 'issue' or need, then once the 'issue' is resolved, the team dissolves. A need for development is identified and the team is made up of people who are capable / interested. A leader is not chosen and then after that the team forms, it is about having the team. Once the development is up and running, that team will disperse. Portfolios / leadership always changes.

In this model, their vision is to grow capability so the new structure of teams forming around issues is not about people having a locus of control but divesting themselves of the 'Me' attitude to embracing the 'We'; a team attitude.

In his article Mertz talked of the notion of team flexibility, with people brought in to work on goals or issues based on their strengths will enhance the opportunity for mission success. He said that leading from the middle is accountability free giving people the freedom to innovate, create and make things happen aligned with the organisation's strategy, goals, objectives and values. Along with the freedom to perform is the accountability to do the right things. It is not wishy-washy accountability; it is real, measurable accountability (2011).

For this to happen, the organisation's vision, goals, strategy and values need to be visible to all in the organisation; a shared knowledge of what it is we want to achieve.

What's Missing

From the analysis of interviews and discussions with principals, the two glaring omissions were around professional learning and development in leadership and collaboration. There did not seem to be any capacity building evident for budding leaders. They are given (top down) leadership opportunities through CoLs, curriculum teams or team / syndicate leadership, but they are left to drift. It does not appear that many of the middle leaders have had any mentoring or professional development around leadership or collaborative practice.

Middle leaders are all very grateful to their principal for offering these opportunities but they then explain that the role tensions are lack of release time, lack of money or resources to enact change. I think that the added tension, although not expressed, is around role clarity.

How are schools building collaborative practices in their schools? Are schools assuming that because teachers work in teams, collaboration is happening? Are they confusing collaboration with co-operation? If this is the case, then it seems that there is a lack of principal knowledge around building collaborative capacity.

I believe that scaffolding our emerging leaders through professional development and mentoring is one of the keys to enabling middle leaders to authentically lead. We also need to create a climate within our organisations where collaboration is the norm.

Long Term and Effective Change

If leading from the middle / distributed leadership is around enabling long term and effective change within an organisation then we need to examine the drivers for change. At a workshop for principals, ASLs and ISLs involved in the Auckland Central Community of Learning, Stefan Brough and Shane Foley, Review Services Managers for ERO, presented Fullan's work on the right and wrong drivers for change.

The wrong drivers are:

- Negative accountability; individual teachers and leadership; technology; fragmented strategy

The right drivers are:

- Capacity building; collaboration; pedagogy; system-ness

Leading From the Middle – Educational Leadership for Middle and Senior Leaders (2012) lists the factors affecting the success of middle and senior leaders include:

- Leadership and trust that emerges out of expertise first, not position;
- A team culture, where the whole leadership team seeks opportunities to collaborate and actively cultivates and develops leadership capability;
- Sound planning and resourcing of middle leadership roles and activities;
- Negotiated job descriptions that balance the management and leadership aspects of the role;
- Opportunities for leaders to engage in professional development and learning
- School use of research evidence to inform change and develop practices that will directly or indirectly improve student outcomes

As well as looking at the drivers for change, we also need to think about teachers' mental model of leadership. It is important for principals to check in on these mental models as they may be barriers to effective middle leadership. At the same time, we need to make our own mental models of leadership explicit. It could be that teachers' mental models of leadership are so varied and potentially at odds with my mental model. If we have a culture of collaboration and openness in the organisation, then a shared model of leadership emerges.

Teams need to be formed around a purpose, an issue, a need for change which has been identified through robust data gathering and analysis. A sense of the direction and an understanding of the need for change is critical to the success of any change.



If we look at the Ministry of Education Leadership Model, relationships encompass educational leadership. Relationships are pivotal to having a climate where people can discuss ideas, share decision making, have opportunities to lead, to take on more responsibility.

When the whole group shares the vision and participates in decision making, a sense of collective ownership is developed. This enables the group to reflect critically, as a team, on their own progress (Clarke, 2009, in Leading From the Middle. Educational Leadership for Senior and Middle Leaders, 2012).

Final Thoughts

Leading from the middle is about foregoing the hierarchical model of leadership. It is about engaging all the people in the organisation to collaborate for the common good of the organisation, with the end goal for schools being increased student engagement and achievement. It is about having a shared vision of the strategic direction of the organisation. It is about building relationships and capacity.

It is about leaders being in the middle of it, not directing, not dictating and not doing it all. It is about creating leverage points, catapulting initiatives ahead and building people up in what they do and how they do it. It is about bringing people, actions, values, direction and results all together to move forward (Metz, 2011).

I believe the conditions for having effective middle leaders are:

- Everyone knowing what the vision, direction and strategy of the school is
- Ensuring the conditions are there for effective collaboration
 - Time
 - Resources
 - Staffing
 - Shared purpose
 - Role clarity
- Capacity building; leadership professional development
- Sound pedagogical knowledge
- Teams formed for a purpose, an issue, a reason that is understood by all
- Teams made up of people who want to be there, who are excited to be part of the change management
- Accountability coming from the quality of the end result or change rather than from an external viewpoint
- Schoolwide workload is manageable

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