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MODULE ONE

UNIT FOUR

Job Analysis

Introduction

The head, as a manager, needs to understand what headship entails. Understanding what constitutes the job of a head should enable you to discharge your duties and responsibilities more effectively and efficiently. A clear perception of your duties should provide you with a framework for self-appraisal. It should make it easier for you to delegate duties. The purpose of this unit is to explain the concepts of job analysis, job description and job specification in order to enable you to appreciate better the complexities of your role in school improvement.

Individual study time: 4 hours

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- distinguish between job analysis, job description and person specification
- appreciate the range and nature of the factors that affect your job operation
- identify aspects of your job description
- describe the attributes of an effective head.

Job analysis

A job analysis consists of two elements: the job description, which covers the tasks to be done, and the person specification, which tells us about the sort of person who is most likely to be able to do the job.

Job description

A job description indicates the tasks and responsibilities to be undertaken. As a school head you will understand that there are tasks that must be done. You will also appreciate that each school situation demands that particular tasks be performed. Your own perception of the job of a head will determine how you decide each task should be undertaken.

Activity 4.1

List all the tasks you currently do in your school. (We would expect your list to contain at least ten items.)

30 minutes

Comments

In listing the tasks in the above activity, you were carrying out the process which is referred to as 'job analysis', that is you were identifying the component parts of your job. The process of job analysis should help to provide you with a checklist of tasks which you need to perform.

Check to see how your list compares with that below (which is intended to be indicative rather than prescriptive):

- setting up an effective organisational structure within the school
- deploying staff
- supervising staff
- supervising pupils
- organising in-school staff development programmes
- promoting and maintaining good discipline
- managing curriculum design, implementation and evaluation
- mobilising and managing resources
- ensuring the maintenance of the school plant
- ensuring clear communications within the school between yourself, and the staff, and the pupils
- maintaining good public relations with parents, and the Ministry of Education
- keeping full and up-to-date records and information about the school
- ensuring that the mission, objectives and targets for the school are set and achieved.

The main elements of a job description should be:

- a title - this usually will follow a nationally agreed system
- statement of the main tasks - it is necessary to separate them out before placing them in logical groups
- an indication of the person or group to whom the individual is accountable - for a school head this is likely to be the District Education Officer and the board of governors
- an indication of the authority the individual has over other staff
- as we are stressing how the school head (and the staff) should relate to other people involved with the school, an indication of the nature of such relationships should be included
- the tasks to be undertaken.

One of the problems with your list is that it is probably quite long, maybe containing twenty items or more. Questions which arise from an analysis like this include: Am I doing what I should be doing? Am I trying to do too many things? Might some of these tasks be as well done by other teachers? Is there a balance in the tasks I do, between, for example, dealing with:

- short-term, crisis matters, for example, an absent teacher; medium-term matters, for example, the timetable for next term; and long-term matters, for example, a review of practices and setting of targets
- resource issues, such as repairs and books, and people issues, such as communicating with staff

- personnel matters, such as the payment of staff, and professional matters, such as organising the exams
- pupils, and teachers, and parents?

The tasks you have identified need to be placed in clear categories and should not be presented as an undifferentiated mass.

Activity 4.2

One of your duties as a head should be to assess the teaching skills of your teachers through lesson observation. Draw up a list of the main things you would look for.

20 minutes

Comments

In assessing a teacher's skills, you would need to:

- study the teacher's schemes of work
- discuss the lesson plans with the teacher
- observe some lessons
- take notes
- discuss the strengths and weakness of each lesson observed with the teacher
- write up a report.

In making this analysis of just one task you may clearly see that there are many elements. The same is true for all the other tasks in which you might be involved, such as organising exams, ensuring staff are paid, or reviewing practices and setting targets. Thus when the job description of a head is written, or you write job descriptions for members of your staff, then account must be taken of these elements, to ensure that the person will not be over- (or under-) loaded.

Person specification

A person specification refers to the type of individual you want in terms of their qualities, qualifications, background and experience. If these attributes are to be assessed accurately, a comprehensive job description which indicates all the skills required must be prepared first of all.

Activity 4.3

Consider your own job as school head. Write a list of the qualities you would include in a person specification using the following headings: background; abilities and skills; motivation and interest; attitudes.

30 minutes

Comments

You may have included some of the following qualities in your list:

- qualified both academically and professionally
- a diplomatic and skilful negotiator not only with the parents and the public but also with those bodies and organisations which have some interest in the welfare of the school

- an enthusiastic and energetic person whose approach to work is businesslike
- a resourceful individual full of initiative
- a successful teacher
- a good personnel manager who can handle sensitive issues and also motivate pupils, teachers and parents to give of their best at all times.

Activity 4.4

Using the guidelines from this unit, revise the job description for your deputy head, senior teachers, heads of departments and the support staff, or where these do not exist, write them.

At least 90 minutes

Comments

You should share the results of this activity with other school heads, and with your local inspector and line-manager, to see how they can help.

Summary

After going through this unit, you should now be able to explain and distinguish between the concepts of job analysis (breaking a job into its components); job description (what the job entails); and person specification (the qualities of the person you require for the job). In this unit we have emphasised the job analysis of the head, but you must be able to prepare analyses for every member of your staff. You also need to be sure that all members of your staff are aware of their job descriptions. A job description is essential if later on you are to carry out an appraisal of the work of any member of staff.

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