

Podcast series

Leadership in Focus

Episode 11 – Fostering a Culture of Teacher Leadership

Discussion guide

The School Leadership Institute’s Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on self-awareness, its importance to school leadership, why it is a challenge and how we can develop it.

Podcast duration:

Part 1: 24m 13s

Part 2: 15m 13s

Speakers

Joanne Jarvis: SLI Director and host of the series

Susan Lovett: Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

Craig Brown: Principal, School Leadership Institute

How to use this discussion guide

This discussion guide is designed to be used in conjunction with Episode 11 of the Leadership in Focus podcast series recording, as a tool for individual reflection and for use with leadership teams. It is recommended that the podcast is heard in its entirety prior to reflection and discussion.

Discussion points for Part 1

For individuals

The discussion emphasised the importance of leadership as collective work – of teachers having the responsibility and moral purpose to talk with and influence colleagues about their teaching practices.

- Regardless of your formal role, in what ways do you influence your colleagues?
- Consider a time when you had a positive impact on the work of colleagues. How might this be conceptualised as leadership work?

- In what ways does the term “teacher leader” resonate with you? What would your colleagues see in your practice if you are demonstrating teacher leadership as described by Dr Lovett?

For teams

Dr Lovett uses the metaphor of the sleeping giant as a call for action. She sees an urgent need to excite people about leadership work and to help teachers develop as leaders.

- Brainstorm opportunities that exist in your context for teachers to demonstrate leadership outside of the expectations of formal leadership positions.
- How could these opportunities be expanded upon?
- How might you foster a culture in your context where teacher leadership is strengthened and nurtured? Dr Lovett emphasises the value of creating conditions that value the contributions of all staff to professional discourse.
- Discuss the benefits of collegial conversations aligned to teaching practices.
- What opportunities do colleagues have to engage in professional conversations about teaching practices?
- How can these opportunities be expanded?

Schools need to be intentional about shaping the conditions for teacher leaders to develop.

- How might deliberate and intentional leadership learning be fostered and supported ‘from day one’ in your context?
- How can newly accredited teachers be included in this learning?

Discussion points for Part 2

For individuals

Craig Brown speaks to the importance for teachers to lead their own learning by reflecting on leadership behaviours, identifying a leadership goal and selecting a mentor of their own choosing.

- a) How have you led your own professional learning? What is the value of leading your own professional learning as you progress in your career?
- b) How timely, relevant and helpful have leadership development opportunities been to your practice?

Susan Lovett speaks about the common perception of leadership as being distant from the classroom and from colleagues, resulting in some teachers not 'choosing to lead'.

- a) What is your understanding of leadership within your context?
- b) What role might teacher leadership serve in the future?

For teams

Dr Lovett highlights the importance of promoting professional conversations as the norm in schools and creating environments where respectful collegial relationships can flourish.

- a) What opportunities do teachers have to engage in meaningful conversations about practice?
- b) How can you strengthen structures and opportunities in your setting to have the greatest impact on staff collegiality?
- c) What is the advantage of this reflective practice? How can teachers be encouraged to be reflective practitioners?

Listen again to Dr Lovett's and Craig Brown's 'top tips' for schools to create conditions for a strong teacher leadership culture in a school.

- a) Which of these tips might your school consider adopting to strengthen your teacher leadership culture?