



SLI podcast series discussion guide ep.23

Teaching mathematics through collective expertise with Eddie Woo

Use the discussion points below to reflect on your own leadership practice or as prompts for discussion with your leadership team. Choose the ones which resonate most in your context.

Speakers

Eddie Woo: Leader of the Teacher Growth Team
Professor of Practice at the University of Sydney
School of Education
Classroom teacher at Cherrybrook Technology High School

Joanne Jarvis: Executive Director, School Leadership Institute and host of the series

Discussion points (Part 1)

Knowledge, skills and relationships

Eddie reflects on the influence of mentors, professional relationships and continuous reflection in shaping his own development as a teacher and leader. He connects leadership growth to a strong moral purpose centred on improving outcomes for students. He highlights that educational expertise is not static, but developed through continuous learning, collaboration and responsiveness to student needs.

What leadership structures in your context support mentoring, coaching and professional growth across career stages?

How do you support the growth of expertise not only in yourself but also those you lead?

“Improvement is far more powerful when teachers see themselves as active participants rather than passive recipients of change.”

Eddie Woo

Building psychological safety

Trust, psychological safety and relational leadership play an important role in creating the conditions to strengthen professional growth. Eddie describes the importance of listening to teachers, “with two ears and one mouth”, understanding their context and valuing their professional judgement. He emphasises that teachers are more likely to engage with feedback and professional learning when leaders demonstrate genuine support and understanding. He explains that meaningful improvement occurs when teachers see themselves as active agents in improving learning outcomes rather than passive recipients of change.

What routines or practices currently strengthen relational trust across teams in your context?

How do trusting professional relationships enable leaders to better understand the needs, motivations and aspirations of colleagues?

Confidence through collaboration

Eddie reflects on confidence as something developed through repeated practice, feedback and collaboration. He highlights the importance of teachers learning alongside trusted colleagues and viewing professional growth as a shared process.

What structures support teachers to observe practice, seek feedback and reflect together?

How do leaders normalise challenge, uncertainty and growth within professional learning?

Discussion points (Part 2)

Strengthening curriculum expertise through continuity of learning

Joanne and Eddie explore the importance of understanding learning progression and recognising the continuity of student learning from K-12.

What opportunities exist for teachers to deepen their understanding of curriculum progression?

What can leaders do to build understanding and a shared purpose to influence change in teaching practice?

Effective assessment and responsive teaching

Formative assessment, questioning and student dialogue are important to understanding student thinking. Eddie highlights the limitations of relying solely on summative assessment and emphasises the role of responsive teaching.

How do you communicate the role of assessment in performance, growth and improvement as a school leader?

How do your teams support professional conversations to create greater understanding about student learning?

Evidenced informed leadership

Meaningful engagement with research and evidence has an important role in professional inquiry. Eddie discusses the importance of making research accessible, relevant and connected to classroom practice.

How can you as a leader make research accessible and meaningful for teachers?

Nuance of explicit teaching

Eddie discusses explicit teaching as a sophisticated and responsive practice requiring deep pedagogical understanding. He highlights the importance of balancing explicit instruction with inquiry and conceptual understanding.

How do leaders ensure explicit teaching practices remain connected to student understanding and engagement?

Discussion point for teams

Eddie notes that teachers are more likely to engage with feedback and professional learning when leaders affirm their expertise and cultivate the conditions for psychological safety.

In what ways can our school convey that improvement is a shared responsibility rather than a solo endeavour?

Eddie highlights that confidence develops through repeated success and supported collaborative practice.

What opportunities exist for teachers to build their efficacy through learning from one another and experiencing success?

Eddie discusses formative assessment as an ongoing process of understanding student thinking

How effective are the formative assessment practices our teams are using to understand student progress?

Eddie discusses the importance of teacher agency in improving practice across the school.

How do leaders in our context leverage the expertise and experience of teachers?