Podcast series
Leadership in Focus

Episode 9 – Supporting student achievement through collective efficacy | Discussion guide

The School Leadership Institute's Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on school leaders and explores the key issues and challenges they face. This episode is a three-part series which will focus on: (1) collective teacher efficacy; (2) collective teacher efficacy and teacher collaboration; (3) efficacy and equity.

Part 1: 17.5 mins
Part 2: 18.5 mins
Part 3: 14 mins

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Speakers

Joanne Jarvis: SLI Director and host of the series

Dr Jenni Donohoo: Director of the Jenni Donohoo Center for Collective Efficacy, prominent international educational leader and author.

Discussion points

For individuals

Part 1

- What is collective efficacy? 2:35–3:16

- Why is collective efficacy so important? 3:17–4:45

- Jenni Donohoo highlighted 4 sources that shape self-efficacy based on the research of Albert Bandura (1997). Refer to the table below and:
  - identify an example of each source from your personal experiences
  - identify actions you might take that will have a positive influence on the self-efficacy of students and colleagues
  - consider the sources that tend to impact most positively on your sense of self-efficacy. Which sources could you seek opportunities to strengthen? 6:34–8:52

4 sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997)	Identify a personal example	Your impact on students and colleagues	Reflect on sources you might strengthen
mastery experiences			
vicarious experiences			
verbal persuasion			
emotional and physiological state (our own positive feelings)			

- Jenni identifies the many positive consequences for students, teachers and school communities when there is strong collective efficacy.

  Refer to the table on the following page.
  Against each consequence, consider whether this is a feature of your practice as an educational leader. Identify behaviours and actions that could strengthen your contribution to a culture of collective efficacy in your setting.
  9:16–11:26

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Consequence of strong collective efficacy	Strong feature	Work in progress	Not yet	Behaviours and actions to strengthen my contribution to collective efficacy
Teachers have greater resilience, effort and persistence when faced with difficult challenges				
Parents involved in their child's education in meaningful ways				
Reduction in use of exclusion for poor behaviour				
Teachers show positive attitudes to addressing special learning needs				
Greater inclination to implement evidence-based strategies				
Teachers report greater job satisfaction and professional wellbeing				
Staff are committed to professional learning				
Teachers have high expectations of students				
Students express strong self-efficacy				

- Jenni describes the establishment of collective efficacy as an adaptive challenge. As a leader, what practices have you enacted to create the conditions for strong collective efficacy in your context? 11:32 – 16:54

Part 2

- In Part 2, Jenni discusses the research regarding the connection between collective efficacy and collaboration. What does this research suggest? She also highlights the need for leaders to increase opportunities for interdependence between teachers, citing some examples. As a leader, how might you strengthen this element of your leadership? 2:27 – 3:51

- Jenni discusses the importance of curiosity in developing a culture of collaboration. "When teachers are curious, they are more likely to actively seek out challenges and new experiences – that will lead to better outcomes for students." In what ways have you demonstrated curiosity in your practice? What behaviours and actions do you demonstrate that show your colleagues and students that you are being genuinely curious? 10:25 – 13:47

Part 3

- In Part 3, Jenni discusses the links between efficacy and equity. "To address the challenges of inequity in education, teachers must perceive themselves to be both individually and collectively capable of delivering effective instruction to underperforming and/or disadvantaged students in ways that will result in students' better performance and increased academic achievement." In what ways do you demonstrate your belief in your capacity to support all students? How would your students, colleagues and school community perceive this attribute in you? 01:07 – 02:07

For teams

Part 1

- In Part 1, Jenni describes efficacy as a mindset. She says, "stronger efficacy results in greater resilience, effort, and persistence on the part of teachers even when they are faced with difficult challenges. The higher collective teacher efficacy, the greater the impact. When teachers or teams of teachers lack efficacy – they give up more easily because they don't believe their efforts will amount to much." Discuss what this mindset of efficacy looks like in teams across your school setting. What would students, the broader community and visitors to your school notice if collective efficacy is present? 3:32 – 4:36

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- Jenni identified 5 antecedents of collective teacher efficacy as listed in the table below. Record the actions that your team, or teams in your setting, could take to strengthen each area. 12:30 – 16:54

Antecedent for collective teacher efficacy	Actions to strengthen this area in teams
Empowered teachers	
Knowledge of each other's work	
Structures to engage in reflection and problem solving	
Consensus on goals	
Supportive leaders	

Part 2

- In Part 2, Jenni highlights the importance of leaders being intentional about creating conditions for genuine collaboration. She says, "In my experience, intentional teacher collaboration has many benefits. When teachers lean on each other for support and rely on each other in interdependent ways, it allows them to build more meaningful relationships and as a result, teachers feel less lonely and less isolated. When teachers collaborate, morale is increased, they generate knowledge and shared understandings, and realize greater impact. By working together, teachers can increase their individual and collective efficacy and create better learning experiences for students." Discuss how you can create conditions that enable stronger collaboration based on interdependence between staff. In what ways would this differ from opportunities for coordination and/or cooperation? 00:32 – 2:12

- Jenni provided advice to school leaders regarding how to shift practices in schools where teacher collaboration is strong, yet little is changing in teaching and learning practices. Discuss this advice and consider how you might enact this in your setting. 12:42 – 13:48

- Jenni highlighted the importance of strong relational trust as necessary to achieve strong collaboration, reminding us that trust is achieved while grappling with challenges together. Her advice was to make effective use of protocols in teams. Discuss the protocols that you could introduce or strengthen in your teams. How will you ensure that their use is sustained and embedded. 15:25 – 17:19

Part 3

- In Part 3, Jenni discusses the interconnection between efficacy and equity. She highlighted the critical role that collective efficacy plays in addressing educational inequities and closing achievement gaps. Jenni also shared a personal story about the impact on her when she did not learn in an environment of collective teacher efficacy. Discuss the positive and practical strategies that individuals and teams can embed to ensure strong collective efficacy across your setting. 02:35 – 07:32

- Jenni offers advice to school leaders regarding how they can create conditions to have a positive impact on collective teacher efficacy and therefore greater equity for students. Discuss what you will enact in your setting to strengthen your approach. How will you know when it is working? How will you engage students, staff and the broader community to ensure that you have a shared commitment to what you are seeking to achieve? 07:44 – 11:59

- Finally, as a team share your moral purpose that informs the essence of you are and why you want to make a positive difference to the lives of students in your setting. Try recording a 2-minute digital story articulating your moral purpose for your self-reflection and/or to share with colleagues.

References

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