Te Whakaahuhu Hautūtanga
Advanced Leadership
A programme for women in education.

“ I didn’t want it to end, if there was a continuation of the programme I would 100 per cent do it. ”

Needs and challenges
Seeking professional development in the leadership space, when Sharon discovered the Advanced Leadership programme she immediately thought “it’s like it was designed for me”. The modules were timely and relevant, to what was happening in both her personal and school contexts.

Her priority was to “take the guesswork” out of leadership, and build a base of theoretical knowledge. The sustained nature of the programme (delivered over six months) appealed, providing an opportunity to put the new learning into practice, and fitting well around her existing home and work commitments.

Key expectations
• Understanding the theory behind leadership
• Ability to recognise earlier mistakes and grow as a leader
• Implement learning from the programme into her school

Sharon Prestidge
Deputy Principal
Mapua School

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia o tātou mahi
Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work
Programme experience

Initially, Sharon was daunted by the idea of virtual professional development, but was pleasantly surprised by the effective facilitation and learning delivered through webinars and the online platform.

For Sharon, a standout aspect of the programme was CORE Consultant Mary Anne Mills’ facilitation. She acknowledged Mary Anne had an “absolute understanding and realism of what is happening and schools”. The fact that the programme is only for women was not the reason it appealed to Sharon, but she enjoyed this as time passed, noting it created “a different dynamic than a mixed gender programme would”.

Leading through change is a key theme of the programme, and Sharon gained an understanding of the theory behind change leadership. “I now consciously plan for how people might react to a situation.” The programme provided useful tools such as Dr John Kotter’s 8 Step Process for Leading Change and Dist Prof Viviane Robinson’s Theories of Action. Sharon uses these regularly, both personally and with staff in her school.

The programme’s Module 5, Creating my pathway, provided time for Sharon to reflect on her career path and acknowledged the confidence gap that can be felt when applying for a new role. She shared that the programme “gave evidence about why women experience this differently to men”.

Learning development highlights

Advanced Leadership provided “concrete strategies” for leadership, and Sharon finds herself “frequently revisiting her notes”. She acknowledged that a variety of models and approaches are presented, allowing participants to “pick the one that works” for them.

Following completion of the programme, Sharon and the leadership team at Mapua School are implementing change in the way they report to parents. The new reporting process allows more parent engagement in learning and assessment, and more cohesion from teachers and leaders within the school, ultimately “making space for better learning for ākonga”.

An important outcome has also been development of her coaching and mentoring skills. Sharon can now support middle leaders in her school, grow others and give them the opportunity to learn and achieve.

Key takeaways

- Coaching and mentoring skills
- A kete of tools, backed by theory and knowledge
- Leading with calm and confidence

Learn more: leadership@core-ed.ac.nz | core-ed.org