

Kristin School NZ

*Leadership Development for Teaching Staff
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Kristin School is an independent, co-educational IBO World School of 1800 students from kindergarten through to Year 13, located on Auckland's North Shore. With 300 employees (200 teachers) it is an organisation that prides itself on holistic people development.

THE CHALLENGE

The challenge was to develop leadership capacity among teaching staff. Traditionally professional learning in the leadership domain was ad hoc and usually involved attending some off-site workshops and/or conference. The learning and follow up to this style of professional development was limited and there was little or no change in practice as a result. The challenge therefore was twofold:

1. How to grow and develop leadership capacity within the school using existing internal expertise and external resources in a structured and sequenced fashion.
2. How to grow and develop a culture of teachers viewing leadership as not just

positional but as the way to strengthen their professional practice and enhance professional learning, leading to student success.

To achieve this there needed to be a challenge to teachers' assumptions about what leadership is. This included a recognition that developing teacher leadership would require changes in other leaders throughout the whole school. To achieve this challenge, it was understood that teacher leaders would need to take responsibility for their own professional growth alongside the growth of others. This would require courage, tolerance for ambiguity, and flexibility.

THE APPROACH

The approach was to develop an in-house leadership programme that brought together professional and academic expertise to support teacher leaders in growing knowledge, understanding and skills to maximise their effectiveness as leaders. The Adaptive Leaders Programme aims were to grow and shape adaptive middle and senior leaders in a variety of school areas and provide high quality on-the-job experience, giving participants a solid foundation in the requirements of successful school leadership. Participants would experience unique opportunities to work collaboratively with learning professionals from within the Kristin community and from other schools.

Specifically, all participants would work on an identified leadership inquiry project that relates directly to the school's strategic objectives and formed the basis of their report/reflection at the conclusion of the course.

The pivotal part of the programme would be the Leadership Circle Profile (LCP) which all participants would undertake at the start of the course. Few if any teachers had ever experienced a 360 tool like the LCP and it quickly became apparent how effective the LCP was in enabling teachers to think about their leadership in context and have access to relevant feedback and coaching on their LCP results.

As a result of the programme several staff have been promoted either internally or externally to leadership positions and from surveys and feedback from participants it is clear that the programme has had a direct impact on their leadership capacity and capabilities. I have been asked by other schools to share this programme and have presented at several conferences and workshops on the benefits of the programme to both our staff and also those external staff members who have acted as leadership mentors.

THE IMPACT

The impact on the participants and organisation has been enduring. To date the Adaptive Leaders Programme has been running for 6 years and seen over 30 staff members 'graduate'. Without doubt the highlight for most is the LCP and the reflection and opportunities this process opens. Many staff have openly shared their results with others, and this has led to more people wanting to join the programme and be exposed to the LCP.

A Graduate's Personal Reflection

I feel proud to have completed the Adaptive Leaders Programme. Professionally I was able to gain knowledge of ideas and strategies used in other schools about my topic of interest, and personally I was able to sharpen my skills and receive valuable peer feedback about my own personal approach through the Leadership Circle Profile.

The Adaptive Leaders programme allowed me as a professional to reflect on my teaching practice and realise my strengths and areas I could improve on. The inquiry I did on staff silos allowed me to use these interpersonal strengths to interact with staff I usually wouldn't work with. These strengths were first identified during the Leadership Circle Profile through the survey tool.