



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

EVELYN CORTÉS JULIO

ISABEL VERGARA PALOMINO



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

Lifelong Professional Development: Empowering Foreign Language Teachers

MONTERÍA - CÓRDOBA

2020



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**Statement submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of English
Teaching Program**

MENTOR

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Our leadership profile

As leaders, we are the type of people who have the patience to help those who are not doing well to improve, and the daring to nurture those who are doing well to do better, in order for everyone to reach their full potential. When working as a team we try to give each person a chance to do what they are best at and create a team effort that delivers a great result. As leaders we lead by facilitating open communication and trying to bring out the best in every team member, by giving the opportunity to grow individually, too. Always being accepting new ideas and adapting constantly for the better. A leader that would not be recklessly positive but who understands that our own lack of enthusiasm shadows, not only our own performance, but also that of our teammates.

-Evelyn Cortés Julio & Isabel Vergara Palomino, Personal Leadership Statement



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Introduction



There is no universal definition of leadership because of different perspectives stated by different authors, organizations, and societies across the world and throughout time. Despite the differences in opinion, these sources share a similar thought in the idea that they see leadership as a process through which a person influences and leads the actions of a united team to achieve a common goal. One clear example of this thought is Gibb's statement “leadership is not a fixed attribute of personality but is a function of the group aims and values, and of the organization and techniques available for reaching a goal” (1947, p.3).

One of the many perspectives of leadership is the teacher leadership which refers to those skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also extends beyond their own classrooms (Danielson, 2006, p. 2). On one hand, teacher leadership is a practice that not everyone implements. Teachers have long been used to working within the limitations of their own classrooms. It could be considered that even in the twenty-first century, little attention is given to the teacher as an educational leader in the school other than in the classroom. According to Ferguson, “leadership was mainly something practiced heroically by big men in big suits. Teachers were not leaders, but the led” (2008, p. 8). On the other hand, nowadays more and more teachers are aware of how necessary it is to have teacher leadership. Just as described by Katzenmeyer & Moller “there is significant progress being made in teacher leadership during the early years of the new century” (2009, p.23). Hence, the development of teacher leadership is gradually being considered as an important factor in improving schools and student’s performance.



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Our Assumptions



The fact that the educational community is being far more aware of leadership as an important aspect and skill in our fields makes us realize how much it has grown over the past years. The knowledge we have reached on this topic has been rising potentially to the point in which we cannot longer overlook the need of embracing and owning leadership in our professional lives. As English teacher leaders we see ourselves as authoritative figures who can draw advantages from having our own assumptions in the classroom. Assumptions are based on everything we know about our classroom; us, teachers are those who interact the most with students, know their strengths, interests, and the aspects they are lacking. Indeed, we know what is best for them, and this can be of great use for a teacher leader. Importantly, as leaders we have the power of influence students' performance through our decision making, given the case in where the teacher is, for example, always involved in the design of the curriculum from start to finish. It is clear that every choice we make will affect greatly not only the student's accomplishments but also the schools.

Collaborative work has taught us the importance of being a good listener and always being communicative; voicing our thoughts and ideas is key to understand our partners' perspectives. A teacher leader stands on the ground and sets to his/her ideas considering others' points of view but should always be flexible, open to suggestions and ideas to let others help find new innovative ways to improve their work. Each member of the team has skills, talents, and experience that we may not have. Each is expected to contribute; Us included, we as leaders need



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to know how to use their skills, see their potential and make it work to have a satisfactory and great result.

Personally, we consider teacher leaders should constantly ask themselves questions that allow them to see clearly where they are standing and what they can improve: Is this strategy going to benefit all my students? Did I take my colleagues points of view into account when planning this lesson? Is this practice going to help us achieve our goal? Will I grow in my field if I do this?

Leadership Empowerment and Implications for the Future.

There is a need to talk about having teacher leaders within the educational community.

Empowering leadership can enhance teachers' motivation by giving them the authority to make crucial decisions in the school and therefore, allow them to grow in their fields. This statement is supported by many authors such as Balyer who says that by empowering teachers, teachers can discover their potential and limitations for themselves as well as developing competence in their professional development. This makes teacher empowerment a crucial issue (2017, p. 1). In addition, schools benefit greatly from those expanded capabilities that teachers develop due to their constant learning process.

Personally, even before starting to work at a school, we plan on having a deeper research on leadership since we have yet to fully comprehend this term which has so many interpretations.

Although we have had such a complete diploma course and learned a lot about leadership, it is



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essential to get more knowledge in order to be able to spread awareness to other teachers who have not had the chance to learn how much impact a teacher leader has over the school and students. However, we would start implementing leadership by starting with a vision for change; public school teachers, for example, are used to work in isolation within their classroom walls and they are not daring enough to do more than teaching according to the procedures they were given in a curriculum designed by someone else. Therefore, acting as a leader among other teachers by influencing them to go beyond their own limits, recognizing that they have the potential to make an impact through their contribution, be more autonomous, and basically, working together for a common goal, can express a clear message to the rest of the educational community; having the courage to implement their own ideas can give a sense of real meaning in one's work, and a sense of having the freedom to make choices based on their knowledge and experience.



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Conclusion

The main characteristics that schools must take into account in order to achieve effective innovation and guarantee quality teaching must be the training of their teachers, coordinate jointly to achieve the established objectives; also, periodic evaluations must be implemented to obtain information about the weaknesses and strengths of each student and to check the effectiveness of and the functionality of the established plans. Schools must also adapt to current situations, such as those of today, and invest heavily in teaching materials that emphasize the area of language, providing meaningful instruction for students, and thus facilitating the process of teachers when teaching.



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