A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

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

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Our Leadership Profile

As teacher leaders, we are committed and dedicated to providing a quality and inclusive education to our students, hence, we will work to be at the forefront of technology in our institutions, which will go hand in hand with innovation and research. Likewise, as twenty-one-century leaders, we will search and improve our teaching methodology to meet all the qualities and talents our learners have. Indeed, in our schools together with our colleagues, we will be the driving force in educational research, in applying new educational trends and providing differentiated instruction classrooms. This is to say, we will lead collaborative teams that seek to create and guarantee an alignment curriculum according to the context of our region.

Above all, authentic leaders like us thrive on changing; nothing will ever stop us to inspire, train, and educate our academic community since we are people-oriented. We will be always sacrificial to our students, co-workers, and directives' needs. In short, we work tirelessly to provide a cooperative learning environment that makes everyone around us feel supported and respected, as well as, help them to succeed mentally, and academically.

—Francisco Causil, Jandalith Murillo & Lesly Salazar, Personal

Leadership Statement.

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1. Introduction

To survive, people have always followed a leader who provides solutions to solve the problems that may arise. In this sense, as leadership is naturally a common process in people's lives, teachers should guarantee their students an environment where they can search for guidance when needed in terms of academic matters, and even personal growth. Hence, leadership is a process in which normal people influence others to bring the best of themselves. When finding a leader in someone, amazing things happen. (Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Leadership involves a set of characteristics that create positive relationships between the leader and the followers, allowing each of them to find their true selves and empowering values like authenticity. Leadership exists in every aspect of our lives, for example, as teachers, our goals are not only to make learners acquired information and skills but to go beyond the walls, create connections among individuals, work together and leave life lessons that can help learners go through life. According to Harris and Muijs (2005), Teacher Leadership consists of a set of activities and actions that are done collectively that seek for a common purpose: enhancing meaning and knowledge among the individuals of a school.

Teacher leadership is also concerned with teachers helping teachers. According to Pellicer and Anderson (1995), Teachers influence teachers so that teachers can help students in their learning process and achieve goals that help the school. As we see teachers as people who can promote change and ideas to a community, we must take this position as a "professional commitment" to be in service to learners and colleagues' needs. Teacher leadership includes being enthusiastic and making efforts to gain respect and recognition of others

despite the obstacles and problems that can occur. Leadership is an action that requires a lot of commitment and action that produces a lot of satisfaction through other achievements.

2. Our Assumptions

As schools are currently interested in enhancing the learning experience for their students, they are requiring teachers who are characterized by being leaders. In this regard, to be a leader, it is crucial to be self-critical, as Watson (2005, p.20) remarks "the study and practice of educational leadership should be reflexive". For several years, schools have been focusing on teachers who can guide other teachers so they create team works where they can provide ideas that enhance the environment, methodologies, and strategies implemented in a school. Complementary, "leadership roles may be demonstrated in informal ways through coaching peers, participating in small groups and teams, or modeling best practice." (Shillingstad and McGlamery, 2019, p.25). In this sense, we should know how to empathize with others so we create a positive atmosphere among our coworkers and our pupils. Getting to know our learners is mandatory, so we can take advantage of it and create more meaningful lessons that catch their attention.

In our changing educational system, being a leader means being at the forefront of information, innovation, and research in the classroom, showing and exuding passion for teaching children, youth, and adults. Besides, being a leader means staying in constant learning to either nurture, reevaluate, or switch to an educational curriculum designed for the students, as Jung (2001, p.187) states "seek to transform followers' values and self- concepts and move them to higher levels of needs and aspirations." Therefore, educational leaders are

a fundamental element at strengthening school reform and improvement, along with students, parents, and academic directors who work towards the goal of guaranteeing a free and inclusive education to the pupils under their wing.

As teachers leaders in schools, confidence, intelligence, wisdom, and boldness are important values when it comes to making crucial decisions to improve our students' learning outcomes. In this regard, we should guide ourselves towards a teaching path according to our students' cognitive skills, this is why methods like inclusive education and differentiated instructions are tentative. To enhance our leader skills some questions will guide and direct our work: (1) What kind of leader does my institution expect me to be? (2) How my job as a leader plays a fundamental role in influencing other English teachers? (3) Will I be able to face and solve every obstacle that occurs? And (4) Are we ready to take into consideration others' critical opinions about our performance?

All teacher leaders should be consider asking these questions as a way to improve and control their leadership skill. Likewise, it helps them focus on what matters most in current school leadership practices, as well as, connect them with their short- and long-term educational goal. As Maxwell (2014, p.2) states "if you want to be successful and reach your leadership potential, you need to embrace asking questions as a lifestyle." This is to say, to be an excellent leader requires self-criticism, self-evaluation, and self-growth and this can only be achieved by questioning ourselves.

3. Leadership empowerment and implications for the future

There exist two factors that have forced modern teachers to modify and improve the way that the teaching process has been carried out. On one's hand, the XXI century has brought some obstacles for teachers like the use of technology and students' learning styles. On the other hand, the current pandemic caused by the COVID-19 has been changing completely the way that teachers and students were used to witnessing the learning and teaching process. Additionally, the XXI century has brought new challenges that make teachers get educated about learners' learning styles, their special needs in terms of cognitive and sensory disabilities, and their likes and preferences. Moreover, the new pandemic caused by the COVID-19 has changed completely the way teachers carry out their students' learning process from now on. In this regard, Hargrove and Prasad (2010) stated "teachers cannot teach as they were taught; they must update their current practices regarding changing school populations, increasing technology, and new ideas about how children learn." (p.5). Likewise, as future English teachers leaders, we plan to take into consideration all of the barriers mentioned above, so we can empower our students by making them realize their strength and abilities inside the classroom.

All things considered, we plan to create a project where every student is included regardless of their needs, learning styles, disabilities, personalities, and likes. First, we will carry out the co-teaching methodology, as Cook and Friend (1995) remark, "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space." (p.2). So, we can create a meaningful environment for our students' learning process as each teacher will use the approach that best suits students. In this regard,

we consider we will use the station teaching approach as it "allows for increased teacher and student interactions" (Sileo, 2011, p.35) hence, it facilitates teachers to assess students with different cognitive skills. In this sense, each teacher will have the opportunity to use the best method that better suits every student's learning style. To do so, we plan to include both co-workers and students' family members, so they can suggest recommendations to us and follow the students' learning process.

Furthermore, we plan to carry out an inclusion project as it "aims to respect and respond to the diversity of students and teachers because it understands that learning is a social process that involves a mutual relationship" (Fernández and Darreche, 2010, p. 499). This is to say, every student is considered as valuable, so their confidence increases. Empowering student's skills and confidence is essential as this process creates an environment where students are willing to learn. Thereupon, through this inclusion project, we pretend to restructure our teaching-learning guides to appeal to our students' type of intelligence as well as to cover the lack of listening and speaking skills practices. Since, we use communication "30% talking and 45% listening" (Worth, 2004, p.3) students need to be able to understand and communicate properly in their second language to acquire a level of English proficiency.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, an English teacher leader needs to be part of every aspect or event that takes place in schools. Shillingstad & McGlamery (2019) affirmed: "a leader in the school setting is often responsible for supervising, directing, influencing, changing, motivating, and transforming others to achieve a goal." (p.26). In this sense, a leader should be always willing to help their coworkers when it comes to lessons, learning guides, school events, and other activities that take place in the school.

Moreover, a teacher leader needs to have a backup plan when things get rough, so anything gets out of control when plan A does not work. "teachers set goals, write objectives, select and implement strategies for meeting the objectives, plan, teach, and assess learning, the students, and the learning environment" (p.27). A teacher leader needs to empower social and communicative skills as he or she will encounter situations where the exchange of information and charisma are essential. Besides, the teacher should carry out methods to catch their students' attention so it will be easier for the teacher to build up a positive relationship with their students. The teacher-student relationship is crucial as it is the foundation of the learning-teaching experience.

All in all, the success of leadership plans depends on the strategies and objectives that are proposed to reach our desired goal. In short, schools need teachers who work cooperatively to improve the teaching of children, receiving the support of the parents of families together with the directors in schools, to evaluate the learning methods that are being applied and verify if they are effective.

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