A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

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UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA
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DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

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

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As future teacher leaders we want to encourage and inspire others to be better and surpass themselves to become greater human beings. Using leadership in different areas of our lives gave us a wider vision about the meaning of working as a team, how to guide others and provide them with the necessary tools to accomplish a common goal with positive results. It is important to highlight that motivation is one of our biggest strengths, we all have leading roles in the team and we encourage each other to work hard, do our best and be self-assure of our capacities because a successful leader always remains confident in challenging situations. Likewise, we learnt about integrity and proper communication among others, creating good interpersonal relations based on respect and understanding to work effectively.

—Karen Hoyos, Shekina Lozano & Marylin Petro, Personal Leadership Statement

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Leadership is defined as the process of influencing others towards the achievement of common objectives for organizations. It means that leaders pursue common goals that allow learners to involve with their own learning and encourage others to accomplish final aims. Leadership is more than a concept, but a line of mental strategies that give a behavioral result. Patterson, 1993 (as cited Murphy, Goldring, Cravens, Elliott, & Porter, 2007)

The empowering actions of a leader have a big impact on students; people tend to model this behavior in order to reach a level of success by working together in social learning contexts. A student leader is a person who is able to communicate well, engage in critical thinking, lead groups in problem solving and planning, and able to stablish and accomplish goals and objectives for the group. (Göker, 2012) Stated, "Even though effectiveness of a leader is mostly measured in quantitative outcomes, it is our ability to reflect on, and optimize our relationships that help us achieve these goals". It means that, relationships are part of our accomplishments and the way we handle things determine the achievement of learning goals; since leadership takes place in the context of relationships and this is crucial for good outcomes, the way we act when we face difficult situations and how we treat others is a significant part of reaching success in organizations. In addition, leaders influence the way to achieve the outcomes owing to their ability to move huddled masses, leaders pursue goals with clarity and influence others to work as a team; additionally, schools and educators should find strategies to identify activities that work for learners to give them the opportunity to lead and cooperate during the EFL class.

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We define leadership as a powerful influence on communities that maximizes the efforts of others through motivation and empowerment to accomplish a common goal. We can say that leadership is more than a personal quality; it is the capacity to create a compelling vision, establish achievable goals and guide followers or members of an organization towards the achievement of their purposes.

Bass, 1990 (as cited Silva, 2016) said that "The leadership process is characterized by influence, not only the influence of the leader upon followers, as described by many authors, but the interactive influence between the leader and the followers. This means that the influence people exert over others can provide the necessary tools to attain goals and reach success.

All things consider, leadership can be seen as part of the lifelong learning, and it helps students to be aware of the world around them, not only in the academic field, but to live in society and assume responsibilities "Positive student leadership opportunities and experiences at school facilitate young adults' transition into the community and into the world of work and adult responsibility" Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Drago-Severson, 2004 (as cited Hay & Dempster, 2004)

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Just like in a business, leadership in the classroom requires an open-minded approach from the leader. (Lambert, 2003)Stated that "a teacher leader may be seen as a person in whom the dream of making a difference has been kept alive, or has been reawakened by engaging colleagues and a professional culture" (p. 422). Those who have managed to keep their sense of purpose alive and well are reflective, inquisitive, focused on improving their craft, action oriented; they accept responsibility for student learning and have a strong sense of self. It is well known that there are no perfect leaders, that a good leader has a vision for the future and has passion for self-development and that of others, so that nothing stands in the way of success. Good leaders take things with calm and help guide us to make essential large scale decisions in order to achieve mutual purposes. Daily we see teachers taking things as they are, but what would happen if we let our beliefs aside and start seeing things differently? What will happen if we stop assuming we know something without having facts to back these beliefs up? What will happen if we implement new strategies to foster leadership in our students? As teachers and futures leaders in the classroom we need to get to really know our students, and most importantly their potential. This will make our leadership work more achievable since a teacher that knows the potential of the learners will have the ability to design more realistic goals that would be viable for all the people involved in the learning process.

Likewise, collaborative work is of greater importance to foster leadership in students. (Cambridge Bussiness English Dictionary, 2012) defines collaborative work as *"the act of two or more people or organizations working together for a particular purpose"* establishes clear

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benefits that can be applied for our leadership purposes. The collaborative work enhances leaders to seek for a diversity of opinions among the members in order to create a collective sharing environment that will strength the ownership of the group members and thus the proficiency. After sharing the members' opinions and shares in the group, the leader can assign different tasks according to his member's visible strengths and weaknesses, covering different angles for the same problem. Even though collaborative learning promotes team decisions, the leader is always in the head preventing any danger that will affect the group integrity. Good leadership practices can use collaborative work as an effective tool to empower members' relationships and reach more effectively the aim purpose.

Leadership is of significant importance in team or group performance. Leaders' empowering actions influence others to accomplish common goals, therefore, empowerment and leadership are positively related in order to be efficient and obtain success. In addition, Peterson and Zimmerman, 2004 (as cited Rothman & De Vijlder, 2019) defines empowerment as "an active, participatory process through which individuals, organizations, and communities gain greater control, efficacy, and social justice" (p. 129). In this sense, empowering leader behaviors will serve as a guidance for people to achieve their outcomes; consequently, leaders' way to exhibit their "power" remain in their behaviors to generate a collaborative work and an effective performance in teams.

Leadership empowerment in the educational field plays an important role, because it can be foster not only in teachers but students as well, providing them with an opportunity to lead and guide their peers to reach their purposes and increase teamwork. "Leadership is associated with creating engagement in teamwork, support, cooperation, empowerment, and membership." (Segovia et al., 2019) Therefore, the creation of opportunities to lead will be beneficial for all the participants in the learning process.

It is known that in educational organizations students and teachers are the main stakeholders of schools and they should become leaders so all individuals are empowered to lead for learning. People's personality and willingness to do something plays a big part in the process of empowering leadership in education since leadership takes place in the context of

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relationships and this is crucial for good outcomes.

Leadership aims to enhance all the participants' competences and strengths through empowerment and automaticity; according to deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1975; Vansteenkiste, Neyrinck, Niemiec, Soenens, De Witte, & Van den Broeck, 2007 (as cited Norris, 2008) "people have a natural need for autonomy as well as a natural need to freely choose their behaviors". It means that autonomous people feel better while doing activities of their own choice, autonomous people are more likely to take responsibility, participate in decision-making, and practice self-leadership and empowerment strategies. The empowerment theory focuses on the identification of an individual's capabilities and seeks to "improve the quality of life in a community and to the connections among community organizations." (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995) Therefore, empowering leaders help to develop successful collaborative teams to improve educational organizations.

In conclusion, the affordances of empowering leadership in the academic system will help learning communities to improve and gain success, moreover educational organizations need to develop a policy and manage external pressures and internal pressures that push schools and the people in them to develop and change in relation to their resources. Assuming empowering roles and being good leaders in their lives, studies, learning may lead to reduce our negative feeling, particularly those of anxiety, confusion and disregard. and develop an integrative concept of inclusion and leadership in education.

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To conclude, educational leadership involves working and guiding teachers toward improving academic processes in order to achieve goals. Likewise, the success of our leadership plans depends on our self-control and attitudes toward learners; as leaders we must worry about what happens around us to look for alternatives to change the situation, engage in critical thinking and lead groups in problem solving and planning. Communication will be our best tool in order to collect data and motivate others to reach a common mission. In addition, being good teacher leaders will help us to guide learners to get involve in collaborative work and lead for themselves taking into account that leading as a team is based on communication, understanding, listening their peers to achieve the same objective.

Schools need to make leadership development an integral part of the educational program Komives and her colleagues argue that leadership, like any other skill, needs to be learned and (Komives, 2006), Scholars like Wren 1995 (as cited Posner, 2004) assert that leadership is central to the human condition—timeless and current, not a passing fad—and that leadership should be understood and practiced by all. An educational system based on leadership, can become schools or classrooms into effective incubators of learning, where students are not only educated but challenged, nurtured and encouraged to change their own context. It is important to provide sufficient resources so that learners can acquire knowledge and be prepared for the upcoming times because leadership in education prepare leaders for tomorrow, focus on strive and achieve success.

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