



"SIGLA M EDUCACIÓN"

UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

ELY SOFÍA CAUSIL VILLADIEGO

MARÍA RAQUEL ORTEGA CARDONA

SERGIO ANDRÉS HERNÁNDEZ



UNIVERSITY OF CORDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

Lifelong Professional Development: Empowering Foreign Language Teachers

MONTERÍA - CÓRDOBA

2021





"VISIÓNA EN EDUCACIÓN"

UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

ELY SOFÍA CAUSIL VILLADIEGO

MARÍA RAQUEL ORTEGA CARDONA

SERGIO ANDRÉS HERNÁNDEZ

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

Teaching Program

MENTOR

PEDRO AGUAS CASTILLO, PhD

UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

MONTERÍA – CÓRDOBA

2021





Our Leadership Profile



As future leaders, we see ourselves as responsible and confident people, who are able to help the community and others around us, and serve as a guide for the welfare in our society. We aim to inspire and motivate every person that follows us to be their most wholesome self, and to work as a team to support others. Besides, we are always looking forward to obtaining the best possible results, and the development of new and greatest abilities that allow us to improve and become better every day. As leaders, we also intend to promote innovation, empowerment and autonomy so learners can become successfully independent in their future.

“The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born—that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born.” — *Warren Bennis*

— *Ely Causil, María Raquel Ortega & Sergio Hernández, Personal Leadership Statement*



Introduction

Leadership can be the most versatile, significant, and powerful tool we can use as innovative teachers since it challenges us to reach higher levels of productivity; as stated by Cohen (1990), “Leadership is the art of influencing others to their maximum performance to accomplish any task, objective or project...” (p. 9). Indeed, Leadership is required in every aspect of our lives, and much more in such challenging field as it is education. In this sense, and aiming to become true leaders, we must address and know in depth the meaning of leadership. Since leadership may be described in several ways by different authors and researchers around the world, it is important to come up with some of those definitions.

In this regard, leadership is a strong connection between a group of people that gets them to move along together with competence and full commitment towards a common objective, as it is stated by Daft & Lane (2008), who affirm that “Leadership is an influential relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes” (p. 4). In this sense, we believe that leadership is the empowering act of leading and guiding a group of followers by working as a team, inspiring respect, encouraging creativity, challenging their boundaries, and current desires of improving and innovation towards change. In this regard, Bryman (1992) defines leadership as “purpose-driven action that brings about change or transformation based on values, ideals, vision, symbols, and emotional exchanges”.



Thus, the very concept of leadership supposes a real challenge to hone effectiveness, to inspire others, as well as to lead a team. As Richards and Engle (1986, p.206), mentioned “Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished”. This being said, and to have a better understanding of all the perspectives of this concept abroad, we must address some areas where leadership operates. For instance, there is Instructional leadership, which aims at improving students’ learning and teachers’ effectiveness. Besides, there is teacher leadership which refers to that set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere (Danielson 2006). Likewise, we have Student Leadership, where students take active roles in their education and develop positive skills in the process.

There is also Transactional Leadership which according to Bass (1999) refers to “the exchange relationship between leader and follower to meet their own self-interests” (p. 10). In other words, Transactional Leadership means the regulation and direction of followers, by rewarding or correcting followers’ performance, depending on the achievement of the goals, in order to maintain the order and standards of the whole group. Finally, Transformational Leadership, which refers, according to Bass (1999) “to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration” (p. 11). In this sense, Transformational Leadership seeks to cause an impact on followers, to motivate and inspire them to be better, preferring to influence them, rather than direct them.



Our Assumptions

From our point of view, we assume that leadership is the way in which a person behaves according to the extraordinary skills and qualities acquired that result in the guidance and tutorship of others towards the future. We strongly believe that leaders are not born but raised and forged due to a series of events in their lives that directs them straight to the willingness to help and instruct others to be proactive and obtain their best version. Thus, leadership can take several forms and perspectives according to the context or the situation in which it is broadened. For instance, in education, it serves as basis in the development of teaching, in and out of the classroom. It makes us analyze the background of the students and assume directly or indirectly diverse aspects of our environment, such as the goals, the abilities, learners' behaviors, the schoolroom itself, and create an attitude towards them based on our personal conceptions.

In order to properly move along, grow as future leaders, and reach our accomplishments, we have been challenged to learn how to develop collaborative work, and it has helped us in a variety of ways. First, we have been learning how to listen actively to what our partners express because sometimes we have different perspectives or visions of the works, and we do not agree with each other's opinion, but we have understood that efficient communication is always important. It is vital to solve our differences by giving arguments and always looking forward to the best for our work, even if sometimes we have to step aside when there are different or best proposals for our assignments. Second, collaborative work has also boosted our teamwork abilities, which will play a huge role as future leader teachers. These



include to cooperate effectively, being punctual, being exposed to different perspectives, among others. Finally, and more importantly, collaborative work has helped us reflect on what it means to be a leader, and forget about that old paradigm that a leader is meant to give orders, but to help each other, guide and listen to them. Furthermore, we might reflect and wonder about our future, because depending on the assumptions and beliefs we make about teaching and leadership at present, we might become different types of leaders in the future, such as transformational, transactional, Instructional, etc.

Along these lines, we have had some concerns about our future as leaders, and in the path towards our goal of becoming true leaders, we have answered many questions regarding ourselves and these wonders. For instance, we have wondered several times *What will be our main leadership principles?, How to put into practice these leadership skills and goals inside the classroom in the future?, What will we truly inspire in followers?* We know what we aim to inspire (respect, inspiration, trust, innovation, change), but it is certainly different from the perspective that others have about us; however, that is something we will find out along the missing path and with the pass of time and experience. Moreover, we asked ourselves at the beginning of this process *How is this course going to help us to become true innovative leaders?* and we have found the answer along the path, finding that for becoming a leader there is no need to be born as one, but to work hard to develop some qualities and skills, and keep looking several and current ways to improve ourselves and inspire others to be better.



Leadership Empowerment and Implications for the future

Empowerment is one of the main tools that we can use nowadays to become leaders, to inspire followers and to arouse greatness, not only for us but also to the ones surrounding us. Rowlands (1995) claims that “It is about individuals being able to maximize the opportunities available to them without or despite constraints”, who, at the same time, believes that the meaning of ‘Empowerment’ can now be seen to relate to the user’s interpretation of power (p. 87). We interpret these words as the use of power that people give or attribute to something in order to face and overcome the difficulties upcoming, and make the best decisions related to the context. These can be personal or collective, in several backgrounds such as work, personal, or academic fields, among others, regarding the objectives or goals set. Likewise, according to Daft & Lane (2008), “Empowerment refers to power sharing, the delegation of power or authority to subordinates in the organization” (p. 243). This focuses on the work area and refers to the way in which leaders and followers work together, and about how a leader delegates functions to their team or followers in order to increase the productivity in an institution with the aim to accomplish the best results for the whole group.

In the current global context, it is important that we observe carefully the several and quick changes that we face every day, mostly related to modern technologies, behavior, methodologies, among other key aspects; therefore, as teachers, we must keep updated about all these concerns because they affect education on several levels. It is necessary for us to be capable to be updated according to the new technologies, learning and teaching techniques, and approaches commonly used in education. This is the reason why we, as facilitators, always should be empowered leaders that show change as theirs, and that are always willing to learn



in order to teach or share that knowledge acquired. We always should be innovative and keep in mind that multiple people depend on what we learn and how we give that information; therefore, we always must be our best version to build up humans as innovative, adaptable, empowered and change agents.

To sum up, empowerment is a necessary quality or skill that must be put into practice in every situation of our lives because it is the capability that we acquire in order to face and overcome the several obstacles we might find in the path. As teachers we have a huge weight on our shoulders because we must be empowered, more than anyone else. We must be confident and solid in order to be capable of facing the possible difficulties presented in the diverse areas of Education. Besides, we should take into account the way we influence others to be better and empowered, to trust themselves and become able to also inspire greatness and spread that confidence and awareness of their internal power.

Conclusions

To conclude, it is important to remark that the success of a leadership plan will depend on different factors, and it will not always cover all the problems raised in a team, conversely, the success of leadership's plans depend on a capable leader, able to understand where the group stands for, and making use of the groups' strengths and weaknesses to help identify and reinforce areas to improve for future pitfalls.

These characteristics include also facing these problems and challenges with ownership, empowerment and an open mind, as stated by Daft & Lane (2008), a leadership's plans should "respond to the reality of change and crisis, the need for empowerment,





collaboration, and diversity, and the importance of a higher, ethical purpose” (p,20). Leaders at schools need to innovate their teaching practices in order to respond harmonically to new students' needs and the needs of the society. Therefore, schools need to re-evaluate their role as part of an on-going globalization, their roles and responsibilities in order to ensure quality of foreign language education.

References

- Bass, B. (1999). *Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership*. European journal of work and organizational psychology, 8(1).
- Bryman, A. (1992). *Charisma and leadership in organizations*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Cohen, W.A. (1990). *The art of the leader*. Prentice Hall Direct.
- Daft, R.L., & Lane, P.G. (2008). *The leadership experience 4th ed*. Thomson South-Western.
- Danielson, C. (2006). *Teacher leadership that strengthens professional practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Michael, S. (2015). *Leadership styles and theories in an effective management activity*. Annals-Economy Series, 4.
- Garrison, D. R. (1993). *A cognitive constructivist view of distance education: An analysis of teaching-learning assumptions*. Distance education, 14(2).
- Richards, D., & Engle, S. (1986). *After the vision: Suggestions to corporate visionaries and vision champions*. Transforming leadership, 199, 214.
- Rowlands, J. (1995). Empowerment examined. *Development in practice*, 5(2), 101-107.