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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

VALENTINA OTERO CONTRERAS

MAIRA ALEJANDRA PAEZ GARRIDO



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

Lifelong Professional Development: Empowering Foreign Language Teachers

MONTERÍA - CÓRDOBA

2022



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

MENTOR

PEDRO P. AGUAS, PhD

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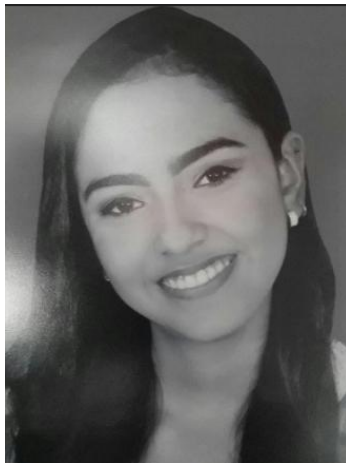
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Our Leadership Profile



As future leaders, we see ourselves as forwarding thinkers who are willing to change and innovate our surroundings and effectively guide a community towards success. We aspire to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses, be a source of motivation for others, and work as a team to create an environment that encourages learning. We desire to contribute positively to a community by participating in decision-making processes and, if necessary, modify the prevalence of the status quo responsibly, consistently addressing continuous cognitive and social growth. Moreover, we are willing to gain insight into new perspectives from followers and colleagues, trying to be as bias-free as possible to provide feedback and be self-critical.

“A person who is able to ignite others’ inner spark by working with their heart whilst applying their own values, is the best leader there is.”

- Otero & Páez, Personal Leadership Statement.



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Abstract



Leadership, as a matter of fact, changes the perspectives of teaching and learning according to the specific approaches chosen to be implemented. With this paper, we aim to convey and remark the positive impact of granting teachers the chance to make their own decisions in accordance with the values chosen to carry out educational strategies, while also giving general information of the topic, our assumptions about the phenomenon and the implications it pertains to the future. This paper is a culminating learning task of a personal leadership statement. Therefore, the goal is to inform those teacher-leaders who are constantly looking for ways they can go beyond the education of their students, innovate, and make real changes in their schools, and therefore in education.

Keywords: *leadership; teacher leaders' empowerment; teacher development; lifelong learning*



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DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



I. Introduction

Throughout the years, the definition of leadership has remained unclear. “There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (Stodgill, 1974, p.7.). Likewise, there are different perspectives about it such as instructional leadership, teacher leadership, student leadership, principal leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, moral leadership, and authentic leadership, which need further exploration. Moreover, each leadership perspective requires a distinct set of judgments and convictions, as the purpose of leadership lies in the ability to influence others to reach their full learning potential according to their current context.

Similarly, Hogan (2005) stated that personality predicts leadership and that who we are is how we lead. This implies that people's various perspectives on life provide a variety of points of view and approaches to obstacles and the evaluation of information, whilst prioritizing certain values and skills considered necessary in a project for a more efficient general communication. This is similar to what Jung (As cited in The Leadership Experience, 2008.) believed about the different capacities of leadership each personality group possessed. Jung assumed that with the correct project and attitude presented in a specific footing that requires a personal set of values and beliefs, anyone can be a leader. Therefore, as future educators, we will play a critical role in improving school processes by influencing students and colleagues' motivations and abilities, as well as the school environment and context; for this motive, it is important to go deeper into leadership and to become authentic leaders.

On the other hand, leadership can be viewed as an ever-evolving concept of complex and misunderstood nature. However, this competence is a fundamental element and a key steppingstone for any required process of collaborative nature, with the purpose of reaching a



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joint objective in a group setting or leading an organization. Burns (2012) asserts that conceptions of leadership are integrally linked to various factors. Thus, how leadership is defined and studied

will depend on one's conception of leadership. Hence, a competent leader is one that can

overcome most difficulties along the chosen path and is of critical and observant nature, balancing both personal and group assets and liabilities. Burns (2012), also explains this can be carried out through the implementation of plans and strategies; without losing sight of their own personal set of morals and ethics; behaving in an egalitarian manner; understanding that the appropriate leadership style and prowess could lead to greater results, and at the same time, maintaining a core unit in the lead community.

Thus, leaders must promote the skills that their followers have and take them to their optimal development. "The leader who tries to do it all alone never gets very far. By acknowledging imperfections and limitations, leaders open the door for followers to contribute their own unique competencies" (Daft, 2008, p. 213). Besides, leaders should not perceive weaknesses as a disadvantage, but as an opportunity to improve and develop aptitudes. Fullan (1996) indicated that it is obsolete to value only leaders who "run a tight ship". Therefore, a leader does not necessarily have to be an exceptional human being, instead, should be valued as someone with remarkable capacities and skills, willing to change and innovate their surroundings for the greater good.



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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

2. Our Assumptions



We believe that being a leader is having the skills and the desire to encourage people to develop their potential and fulfill their goals successfully. “Leadership is more than a set of skills; it relies on a number of subtle personal qualities that are hard to see but are very powerful” (Daft, 2008, p.18). All these qualities can be boosted to obtain better general performance, and as future teacher-leaders, we must incorporate them to direct an EFL class.

Leaders usually use their assumptions to lead educational or foreign language classroom processes based on their own development as teachers. According to Richards and Lockhart (2007), a literate teacher has an extensive knowledge base about teaching. Consequently, a well-prepared instructor is capable of decision-making processes in the classroom and can make proper judgments. Likewise, Richards and Lockhart (2007) also stated that to have a deeper understanding of teaching is necessary to reflect critically. Self-criticism is useful to analyze the teaching experience and notice advances and setbacks to make room for improvement.

However, as with most things, leadership comes with some very common doubts and questions we often find ourselves wondering.

What are the values that we want to reflect on our teaching? What do we aspire our students to do with the knowledge we give them? Are we capable of efficiently supporting our students in order to bring out the best of them? Thus, to answer these and other inquiries that we find along the way, it is necessary to do a self-analysis and look critically at tutoring, also being receptive to others' feedback may be key to improvement. Teachers often wonder about the validity of their teaching, and it is an important matter to reflect on, but as forming leaders we believe that shaping and igniting the love of learning inside of every student is what matters the



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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



most in the long run.

On second thought, it is known that leadership is a reciprocal matter. Leaders need to connect with their followers and vice versa. Nevertheless, we consider leaders should take in

other leaders' perspectives. Personally, we were able to experience this throughout the course, since working with other future leaders influenced our leadership learning by understanding and becoming acquainted with the different natures and personality types there are out there; seeing as different points of view and mindsets, make way for a great variety of teaching styles and growth opportunities. We were able to hear our partners' ideas and acknowledge their skills, experiences, and opinions to collaboratively gain insights about leadership and build our leadership profile.



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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS

3. Leadership Empowerment and Implications for the Future

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According to Kelley, (As cited in The Leadership Experience, 2008) fully participating in an organization, having a sense of belonging, solving problems, and getting involved in situations that go beyond the limits of work, are typical of an active individual. Therefore, teacher leaders must be involved in their schools' decision-making processes by setting directions, building relationships, and mainly developing people. All of this contributes to the school's goal accomplishment while empowering its members throughout the process. "Empowerment provides strong motivation because it meets the higher needs of individuals" (Daft, 2008, p. 243). Consequently, inciting members of an organization to be motivated, will bring greater results since each of them is willing to work to achieve a common goal and act on their own initiative.

Likewise, as lifelong learners, teacher leaders need to constantly update their knowledge to keep up with more recent skill requirements and educational levels that might be necessary according to the different settings and contexts you will find throughout your career. According to Trillium Lakelands (n.d.), the leader needs a concentration of different skills and knowledge than previously required in earlier times. Therefore, a leader must be transformational in nature, focusing on the leadership necessities.

In like manner, according to Leithwood et al. (As cited in Trillium Lakelands, n.d.), there are seven strong claims about successful school leadership: School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning; Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices; The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices, not the practices themselves, demonstrate responsiveness to the contexts in which they work; School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully



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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions, School leadership has a greater influence on schools and student when it is widely distributed; Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others, and a small handful of personal traits

explain a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness.

With this in mind, as an important part of a plan, having a vision might facilitate not only set some of your goals and expectations, but also as a groundwork for future implementations and educational activities that will complement the learning process. As stated by Cash (1997), good leaders are motivated by their vision, their desire to learn, and the success of their students and colleagues. Thus, it is primordial for teacher leaders to encourage their students to act on their own initiative. “Individuals have a need for self-efficacy, which is the capacity to produce results or outcomes, to feel they are effective” (Daft, 2008, p. 243). This will lead students to feel encouraged enough and be rewarded for their efforts.

In addition to a clear and precise outlook, establishing a set of values to abide by is key, we plan to lead with kindness, an open heart, empathy, and perceptiveness while allowing students to make mistakes and grow from them. “Recognizing the hard work and accomplishments of the organization's people must be a priority to ensure the sustainability of ongoing work” (Uzarski & Broome, 2019, p. 12-17). In a school setting, authentic teachers can empower their students and colleagues too. It is of great importance to recognize people's accomplishments to fuel the motivation to keep pushing forward, which can evoke a more positive attitude about their tasks and help them be more aligned with their goals.



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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



4. Conclusion

According to our previous statements, empowering students and colleagues is essential for successful leadership plans. Daft, (2008) states that empowerment is about power sharing, the delegation of power or authority to subordinates in the organization. Consequently, students will be able to have a purpose to work and find greater intrinsic satisfaction with it. Therefore, the best way to ensure the quality of foreign language education depends on the planning process and the involvement EFL teacher leaders might have in it. The collaborative work from the school community is primordial when talking about leadership and its process; When creating a plan, it is necessary to receive an assessment from others and their unique set of perspectives, ideas, and attitudes. Then, if needed, being able to make changes accordingly.

Moreover, teacher leaders from a school should be empowered enough to fulfill their tasks and contribute positively to the institution. According to Daft (2008), employees should receive information about their workplace's performance for them to be capable of helping the company meet its goals. Likewise, they should receive knowledge and skills to contribute to the goal's achievements and feel they have the skills to make good decisions. It is also essential to provide employees the power to influence work procedures and organizational directions. Besides, staff should understand the meaning and impact their jobs have and be rewarded for their progress towards goals.

In conclusion, it is necessary to bear in mind that a good teacher leader creates an uplifting environment where there is room for comfort and reciprocity; a teacher leader inspires their students to overcome themselves by setting a space of trust, by motivating them to improve their abilities and helping them to acknowledge their own talents. Being a true leader does not depend on position or fame, but on inspiring people around and achieving results along with



them.

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