

A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

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UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

Lifelong Professional Development: Empowering Foreign Language Teachers

MONTERÍA – CÓRDOBA

2023



CO-SC5278-1

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

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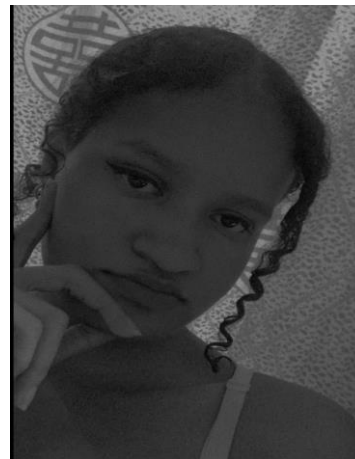
Our leadership Profile



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As leaders, we see ourselves as professionals capable of guiding and motivating people so that they feel happy doing collaborative work. We consider ourselves to be positive, enthusiastic, tolerant, and capable of finding a solution to any problem or facing any challenge. Finally, we consider ourselves people with emotional intelligence and empathy who are willing to be guides for future generations as teacher leaders.

“Being a leader means working in the present towards a vision of a better future and learning from the past”— *Ensuncho, Lopez & Sampayo. Personal Leadership Statement..*



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Abstract

Over the years the concept of leadership has evolved and transformed according to the understandings of the epoch. Its complex nature being the subject of discussion among theorists and scholars; nevertheless, something in which we cannot disagree is the role that leaders and leadership have had in the creation and development of societies throughout the years, being an important subject in diverse areas of life, one of those areas being the educational field. Teacher leaders guide, inspire, and seek to improve the quality of education through collaborative work. Teacher Empowerment allows teachers to be able to create, innovate, and implement strategies, as well as look for different approaches to meet students' educational needs. It also gives teachers the opportunity to grow professionally.

In this personal leadership statement, we seek to highlight the importance of this phenomenon in the educational field from the perspective of teacher leadership. In addition, this document contains an exploration of relevant literature regarding the concept of leadership and teacher leadership. Likewise, it illustrates our assumptions and leadership empowerment in light of teacher leadership, and the implications for the future. This study is the starting point for building our own path as future teacher leaders and a great addition to our professional development.

Keywords: Leadership, Teacher leadership, Education, Empowerment, Foreign Language Teaching, Collaboration.



Introduction

Leadership is a crucial aspect in the construction, development and shaping of social systems. However, it is not only found in big and important systems or contexts, nor is it only done by famous and renowned people (Daft, 2008). The act of leadership involves guiding a team to achieve a certain goal through direction, organization, and motivation. Leaders embolden the entire group to take the actions they need to succeed and reach their potential (Bolden, 2004). This leadership statement approaches the perspective of teacher leadership. The rest of this statement consists of three more sections: our assumptions about teacher leadership, the leadership empowerment and implications for the future, and conclusions.

Within the school the teacher plays a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape and fostering a positive teaching and learning environment for students, “Education is not filling a pail, but lighting a fire” (Yeats, 1933). So that, the role of teacher leadership inside the school is important due to their ability to inspire and guide educators, students, and staff towards a shared vision of academic excellence and development by fostering a positive teaching and learning environment for students, in other words, to be leaders who make a difference in the lives of others (Balyer & Ozcan. 2016). To sum up these ideas, teacher leadership is a collaborative process that involves a set of actions and behaviors that focus on creating the proper conditions under which individuals learn, grow, and work together (Muijs & Harris, 2005); teacher leaders not only seek to make changes and improvements in their classroom but also in the entire school and the life of others.



Our Assumptions

One perspective on leadership, teacher leadership, focuses on teachers' interactions with students and their roles in the educational setting with the aim of enhancing the quality of education while also gaining more empowerment and experience as a result. As future teachers and leaders, we ought to consider how our assumptions affect our performance within the educational institution. First, it is crucial that leaders know how to convey their ideas to the team, so good communication is a must. Second, leaders must know how to assume challenges and take risks. In addition, responsibility is what the whole group needs, but leaders need it more since they are the ones who usually take responsibility when problems arise. Third, leaders must be confident, both in themselves and in their competence, since what they do will be conveyed to others. Finally, good leaders must know how to adapt to changes, to listen to and respect the opinions of others. In conclusion, we as teacher leaders have to put into practice these values and have the desire to improve every day. If we have any kind of problem, teamwork is also the way to go. Teacher leaders know how to work collaboratively with others and foster a collaborative and positive environment.

In this course, apart from having learned a vast variety of knowledge on how to be a leader and teacher leader, one of the best things is that we have worked collaboratively, and this has influenced our leadership learning in a very positive way since it has allowed us to improve, defend positions, reformulate ideas, and listen to different points of view that help us grow personally and professionally. In the same way, collaborative work has allowed us to improve the



interaction within our group and prepare ourselves for different social, cultural situations that we are going to face in real life.

In the light of awareness, when investigating the impact of leadership, meeting new approaches, and discussing conclusions; many questions also come to mind: How do leaders keep themselves motivated? What values are crucial when it comes to leading? What can we do as leaders to meet the desired objectives? Questions such as these already have answers, and the ones who have not yet been answered are in the process of being.



Leadership Empowerment and Implications for the Future

The process of empowerment is an important participant when seeking to be a good leader, whether in the educational area or in any other scenario. In leadership, empowerment allows for a better understanding of the desired goals and creates more engagement when working towards them. Daft (2008) states that “A significant way in which leaders can meet the higher motivational needs of subordinates is to shift power down from the top of the organizational hierarchy and share it with subordinates” (p. 242). The previous fact is equally applicable to the educational setting and to us as teacher leaders. On this basis, empowerment represents a benefit for the entire educational setting since it gives teachers the opportunity to engage in school matters beyond their traditional role and, as a result, affect the students’ performance. Nevertheless, teacher empowerment needs not only the teachers’ willingness to improve and innovate but also the school’s administration disposition to support the process (Balyer et al., 2017).

Continuing with the ideas, empowerment in teacher leadership can be promoted through different means. For instance, by engaging in activities towards school improvement, being involved in decision-making, promoting engagement to provide meaning and cooperation, developing self-efficacy, and providing students with more autonomy for them to develop their abilities rather than control everything. In fact, one of the situations in which we can promote empowerment in our classrooms is related to autonomy. It is common to observe that within the class dynamics students act as receptors. They learn the content, but sometimes they do not know what to do with what they learned or do not find it important.



For this reason, as future teacher leaders, we must know the importance of autonomy and meaningfulness in the classroom and encourage our students to be leaders within their own learning process so they can give meaning to what they learn in their English classes. In addition, to achieve that goal we also suggest some steps:

- Motivate students with simulations and conversations with people who speak the language. In this way they would be interested in learning how to say or express certain words or to express themselves.
- With technology we can employ games and simulations where students can make use of the foreign language.
- Carry out educational activities in the institution alluding to different languages and cultures around the world to encourage the use of the foreign language.
- Show the importance of learning a foreign language, in this case English, and it can change the perception of life.



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Conclusions

Empowerment allows teachers to be able to analyze situations or problems that arise in schools or in the workplace and thus be able to implement different strategies that allow us to change these situations into environments where we can work comfortably and where there is better coexistence. Leadership today is of utmost importance in all institutions, and this depends on the fact that students continue to grow in all possible areas and the necessity of teacher leaders increases. Schools need to implement all kinds of strategies that go hand in hand with the shared goals and values. Since leadership is a relatively important issue, schools need to train empowered teachers who are capable of inspiring others, not just students. Teachers must be leaders and role models capable of transmitting all their knowledge and being entities that motivate and guide students on the best path. Leaders generate vision, unite people, motivate them, and create change.

To conclude, it is important to point out that to guarantee the quality of education in foreign languages, all educational institutions must implement spaces that allow teachers and students to be able to develop all kinds of skills that help improve the environment that surrounds them, not only in schools but also in the community. Leadership must have great relevance in institutions since we need people who motivate and inspire to change the course of inequality and lack of tolerance that we face daily.



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