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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

CAMILA CAUSIL CATAÑO

GABRIELA MARCHENA DEMOYA



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

Lifelong Professional Development: Empowering Foreign Language Teachers

MONTERÍA - CÓRDOBA

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CAMILA CAUSIL CATAÑO

GABRIELA MARCHENA DEMOYA

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

MENTOR

PEDRO AGUAS CASTILLO, PhD

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Our Leadership Profile



As future teacher leaders, we see ourselves as active, innovative and empowered people, who are able to work as a team for our community. We are able to promote communication, empathy and flexibility to support our students in their own personal growth. Among our interpersonal and cognitive skills, making the right decisions, working memory, planning, and conflict management stand out. These qualities and abilities allow us to transform unexpected problems into learning situations. Likewise, we work based on integrity, respect, and motivation, with the aim of creating environments of trust, commitment, and fun, where our students develop their full potential.

“Leadership is the ability to guide your work team with decisions that lead them to feel empowered.” —*Marchena & Causil, Personal Leadership Statement.*





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Abstract

As documented in history, the concept of leadership was initially awarded to those people who stood out in the community for having the ability to perform difficult tasks. Over the years, this term has been widely applied in different fields, including education. This personal leadership statement is the result of research, analysis, and reflection of data that prove the importance of this phenomenon among teachers for the teaching of a foreign language. In addition, this paper contains relevant literature on this topic. Likewise, our own action plan and the implications for the future of our teaching work. This statement is the starting point for a future path of building leadership and empowerment in our teaching work.

Keywords: leadership; personal leadership statement; foreign language teacher.





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Introduction

Over the years, experts have tried to decipher the concept of leadership. As Daft (2008) point out, leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes. In order to implement this concept in an effective and worthwhile manner, individuals need to acquire an understanding of the meaning and significance of the phenomenon. Leadership also requires level of perception, which some people might call ‘vision’ (Albert Low, 1989, p.20).

Leadership is defined as the ability to “empower followers” (Conger, 2006, p. 17) through guidance, example, and encouragement. Leaders vary in terms of style. Some are bold and transform their followers by instilling in them a vision of what they can achieve and how to achieve it (Low, 2010). Other leaders are humble and inspire their followers by serving them, identifying their needs and ensuring that those needs are fulfilled. In either case, the objective is the same: Leaders seek to motivate their followers to reach their maximum potential. A leader is someone whose primary concern is with the positive and progressive direction of the organization of which he is a part. His concern is not with his own standing or achievements but rather with the success of those around him (Silva, 2016).

Leadership is not a new idea. Covey (1998) proposes the concept of leadership centered on principles, which has to do with the internal transformation of the human being, which will lead him to influence others in the long term. Complementing the term leadership with education, acquires a formative and projection sense in school institutions.





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Therefore, the educational leader becomes the person who, with specific conditions, facing the sense of education, guides the educational community, such as students, teachers, parents and people who manage educational processes, in the search for improving educational quality, climate and organizational culture in personal growth, represented in the integral formation of the institutions. The main areas highlighted in this paper are leadership and management, empowerment, functions of leadership, types of leadership, and roles of leaders.





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Our Assumptions

Just like our daily lives, teacher leadership must be constantly present in our classroom. According to Daft (2008) Leadership is a daily way of acting and thinking that has little to do with a title or formal position in an organization. This means that the role of an authentic leader is to transmit a behavior of empowerment and leadership both inside and outside the classroom, given that this will reflect high levels of personal and professional trust towards the students and the rest of the educational community, including parents, faculty and staff. In addition to this, the teacher leader will promote high standards of creativity, innovation, and commitment within the community, especially, when facing uncharted situations or problems whose prompt solution cannot be skipped or postponed. In addition, it is at this stage that the teacher thinks about those problems that may arise in the classroom, problems that their students may have, such as distraction, dependency, and non-compliance, among others. However, a leading teacher does not get stuck on the problem, but rather implements tools such as optimism and resilience, to develop possible solutions on how to approach the situation as a true team. According to Woldeyes (2014) resiliency is the ability to recover one's sense of equilibrium after a stressful event.

Therefore, it is important to highlight that each member plays an important role in the team; everyone is in charge of something and helps each other. . Consequently, if this were different, there would be no true teamwork where someone else's ideas were inconsiderate, rejected, or forgotten (Badger, Sadler-Smith, Michie et al. (1997).





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Likewise, assumptions about an authentic leader include the traits of self-awareness and self-consistency. This means that the leading teacher should develop the self-control skill that allows him/her to constantly reflect and self-evaluate his/her behavior, and determine if her/his actions are aligned with the ideas and values that she/he professes. In addition to this, Godino (2013) stated, cooperative or collaborative leadership is regenerative and takes things further. In other words, a teacher leader should promote teamwork because leadership is not just about directing and achieving solitary. A teacher leader is able to guide their community to achieve common goals in a collaborative manner.





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Leadership Empowerment and Implications for the Future

Empowering leadership involves behaviors of formal leaders, such as encouraging subordinates to express opinions and ideas, promoting collaborative decision making, and supporting information sharing and teamwork (Sharma et al., 2015). It means that empowerment in leadership is a tool that leaders use in order to guide and give support and motivation in the ideas and projects that others have in mind, also, to empower them and make them their own through the process of achieving their goals and how they act in the face of decisions and new ideas. Empowerment today is reflected in the different scenarios such as work, daily life, and above all in education.

Nowadays, we expect our school leaders will have a core set of values that will guide their leadership in helping them to create a learning environment conducive to academic achievement and personal growth for all students. Yet, according to Bowen, et al. (2006), our society has come to expect that school leaders will make decisions for the common good and that their actions will be driven by a commitment to moral and academic excellence. It would follow, then, that people preparing for school administration careers receive systematic education about ethics related to leadership.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case, empowerment programs can be difficult to implement in established organizations because they destroy hierarchies and upset the familiar balance of power, Draft (2008). Leaders often face complex situations that call for difficult decisions to be made. Mintrop (2012) suggests three ways to respond to demands:



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Resistance, alignment, and coherence. Educational Leaders can ignore mandates, risking heavy consequences and job security; maintain the status quo by aligning school goals with system goals or establish a culture of shared responsibility and consistency between external and school-based systems.

Teacher leaders become part of a school system's culture may influence the perception of individuals inside and outside of the organization "Leaders provide their followers with an understanding of how their jobs are important to the organization's mission and performance, there by giving them a direction within which to act freely" (Daft, 2008, p. 243). Effective school leadership includes many abilities and behaviors that have evolved over the past century, including leading and managing the school in a manner that is inspiring and empowering.

Hobbs and Moreland (2009) claim that empowerment is the weapon that teachers today use to gain enough power to take charge, motivate and be an influence in solving those scenarios that affect their lives. As a result of this, empowerment has become a very important tool in our days since it involves a constant search to be better. This is true, especially for making important decisions, working on projects, or embracing uncertainty in difficult moments and difficult decisions that we as teachers have to make to improve our teaching process. First, as a leader, I have to embrace my weaknesses so that my team can feel more open to express their thoughts and I can listen to their ideas.





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Last but not least, it is not about underestimating the students' abilities, because it can hinder the process of acquisition of the second language. We are teachers and as such, we should act for the well-being and good education of the students. It is also important to remember that communication is a leadership attribute that should be consistent. Communication is important to success. Without clear communication, our team will have trouble understanding and achieving their goals.





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Conclusion

Empowerment allows teachers to have the power to be autonomous in analyzing and proposing our strategies and changes in their area of work in order to improve. Leadership is vital to the success of all institutions. It is a journey that requires reference points to ensure leaders remain on course and continue to grow. Almost all schools need more deliberate and focused leadership development. They need teachers leaders who inspire people to follow. This is especially true when implementing successful work processes. Bolin (1989) defined it, as investing teachers with the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies and to exercise professional judgment about what and how to teach.

To conclude, it is important to note that to guarantee the quality of foreign language education, schools must promote spaces that allow teachers to be challenged, nurtured and encouraged to change the context of the community that surrounds them. Also, schools should leadership development an integral part of the educational program to stimulate harmonious and trusting spaces that respond to the needs of students. In this way, both teachers and students will be able to face problems with ownership, empowerment, an open mind, and leadership.





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