A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

DANIELA AGUIRRE PÉREZ
PAULA BELEÑO ARCIRIA
KAREN SOFÍA MARTÍNEZ RUÍZ

UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

Lifelong Professional Development: Empowering Foreign Language Teachers

MONTERÍA - CÓRDOBA

2020
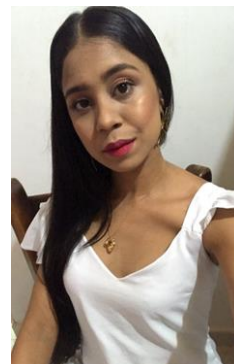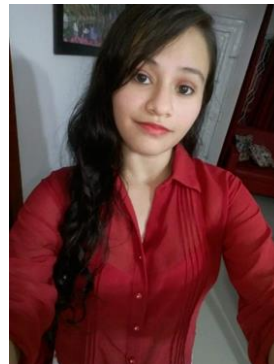
We as future leaders see ourselves as people-oriented leaders who feel comfortable doing collaborative work. We are focused on motivating other people to have determination, inspiring them to innovate and being authentic while remaining faithful to their ideas and principles. We consider ourselves as positive, tolerant and persevering people capable of facing difficult or complex situations. Moreover, for us it is mandatory to be in constant learning due to it is essential to grow both, personally and professionally. Furthermore, we are easy to talk to others since we believe that every interaction is an opportunity for leadership and growth. For us, it is vital to know team members' characteristics in order to take advantage of their strengths and improve their weaknesses.

"Every time you have to speak, you are auditioning for leadership." --James Humes

—Daniela Aguirre, Paula Beleño & Karen Martinez, Personal Leadership Statement

Introduction

Leadership is described as a process through which a single person inspires and stimulates a group of people with the aim of accomplishing a shared objective (Northouse, 2010). In this sense, the leader is the one in charge of directing the group; nonetheless, leader's mission is not to give orders, but to support the group so they are motivated. The leader should listen to the members of the group in order to make decisions together. Leadership consist of knowing the abilities of each member of the group hence, they can be assigned a task in which they excel and contribute effectively to the group. Leaders think of group goals, objectives that will benefit the whole group, not individual goals where he is the only one who gets benefits. In the same thoughts, leadership is facing all kinds of situations, some positive or negative, but that influences the process of leading, and therefore, its members are affected, this implies changing methods, strategies to overcome the circumstances taking into account the perspectives of the group. (Bass, 1990).

On the other hand, we find the challenges that leadership brings with it because the fact that you have accepted a leadership role is a drastic change, as every day is full of possibilities for change. "Some of them are things that you have chosen and others are the luck of the draw", hence the importance of not losing balance due to change; you need to see beyond, have the ability to see things coming and prepare or be able to handle it, Wolven, J. (2020). In the same sense a leader must be multifunctional, innovative, and humble. An exemplary model for his team, which is capable of overcoming any obstacle

for his group to advance successfully according to Hargreaves & Fink (2012) the leadership challenge is about how leaders mobilize others to want to do extraordinary things in the organization.

To have a better understanding about what leadership is, it is necessary to explore it from the different perspectives such as Instructional leadership that is closely related to management functions within the school (Cavazos 1999; Murphy 1988; Sheppard 1996). On the other perspective is associated with actions and behaviors such as "listening, clarifying, encouraging, reflecting, presenting, problem solving, negotiating, directing, standardizing, an reinforcing" (Glickman 2002, p. 40). Giving accurate instructions facilitate the effective development and achievement of the goals, moreover, reinforces the relationship among peers. Otherwise, Teacher leadership is seen as "teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice". (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, pag.17). Leaders can lead in any context, support, and motivate others to work collaboratively in educative innovation. Student leadership is all the activities that allow and enhance students to use their voices to express their ideas and be part of the decision-making (Göker, 2019). While, principal leadership refers to all the influence and efforts done in the schools by the principal. Principal´s work represents a big responsibility with the quality of schools and the learning of pupils (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Transactional Leadership is a "contingent reward leadership" in other words, leaders encourage their

followers to achieve the set goal through reward or punishment which will keep their followers motivated and focused, Judge, T , & Piccolo, R (2004). On the other hand, transformational leadership occurs when "exceptional leaders have an extraordinary influence on their followers". In other words, leaders transform the needs, preferences and individual values of their followers to "objectives of collective interest". In addition, this will help the followers to commit to the team's objectives and be willing to make personal sacrifices, Lai et al., (2020). Whereas, moral leadership, as its name implies, has to do with ethics, with "leadership behavior that is consistent with personal and organizational values that in turn are derived from a coherent ethical system." From the above we can say that moral leadership is a vital component in education since education is, in itself, a process based on ethics, Burnham, J, (2015). Finally, authentic leadership is defined as a process related to positive and psychological capacities where leaders develop self-awareness, positive self-development and self-regulated positive behaviors (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

We consider that leadership is the set of skills that a leader must have such as cunning, emotional intelligence, firmness, innovation, autonomy and the most important thing that the individual can use all these skills to guide, direct and influence each member of his team with enthusiasm to achieve the planned objectives.

Our assumptions

Leadership has long been applied to different fields in society, as well as education. The school is a very broad field, where interaction occurs, individual opinions and ideas are shared among several participants, and it is there where Leaderships plays an important role. Davis (2003) stated that "leadership implies movement, taking the organization or some part of the it in a new direction, solving problems, being creative, initiating new programs, building organizational structures, and improving quality" (p.4). Following this thought, a good leader based on his expertise, unifies, directs, and establishes strategic paths that allow achieving collective objectives or projects that are also inclusive and equitable for students that benefit their learning and participation process. The success of a good team usually requires a competent, committed, and dedicated leader who cares about exploring, innovating, transforming, and learning from what education offers, furthermore, a leader considered as an important aspect to trains his team, incentive the collaborate work, value their initiatives, actively motivates them to be at the vanguard integrating new strategies and technologies that lead the school and its students to be the best and serve as an example for other institutions.

Collaborative work during the course has challenged us in a variety of ways. We have been learning how to be more responsible and punctual but also patient, as not all of us work at the same speed sometimes is necessary to wait for the partner to complete their parts o for them to have the time to work together. Collaborative work has

taught us that a leader is nothing without his/her team. As a leader, you can do your best, but if team members do not do what they are intended to do, nothing will go as planned. In addition, collaborative work represents an advantage when there are doubts and we can work together to solve them. Sharing our ideas and seeing how sometimes we agree and sometimes not and create debates to reach agreements has shown us that leadership is not just giving orders and waiting others to listen.

As a way of self-evaluation as future leaders that we will be, we must ask ourselves the following questions that are essential to know how to be an exemplary leader: am I being a good leader? , the second question would be, do I know my team? , and the last questions, are I using my experience to train my team? We believe this are the question that as future leaders we must ask ourselves since the good coexistence and the success of each goal that the team proposes depends on them.

Leadership Empowerment and Implications for the Future

According to the Oxford Dictionary, (2020) Empower is defined as "Give someone the authority or power to do something". Considering this, when students and teachers are empowered, they receive learning that is meaningful for their present and future life. We as teachers are challenged to get students to believe, design and create their own learning path, in order to make learning process significant for them. Similarly,

empowerment is a "process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal both by formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing self-efficacy information" (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). In this sense, our mission as teachers is to guide students to be self-sufficient. Students at school need to learn about leadership and collaborative work among other things that will be useful for them in their daily lives. Leadership is not controlling and giving orders to subordinates, leadership must be taught, a leader teaches others how to also be a leader. A leader wants the best for his team, and the best team is the one where each member has the ability to take the helm when the challenge they face is his specialty, so a good team knows the weaknesses and strengths of each member to take the better of each one and thus improve the team, that is empowerment. This learning applies to all areas of life, which is why there is no better place to teach it than in school. As teachers, we must make it a priority to teach to be a leader, to know oneself, to respect and value the skills of others and to work as a team. Every school should include in its curriculum a competence that focuses on forging self-sufficient people capable of leading and empowering others to lead. We consider that this should be done in the following way:

1. Train teachers on leadership, how to teach and implement it.

2. Reform the curriculum to include the leadership empowerment competence.

3. Define the goals to be achieved in each area.

4. Develop activities that lead students to know themselves.

5. Create opportunities for each student to demonstrate their skills and talents to lead.

6. Delegate functions in the classroom according to the students' strengths.

7. Strengthen collaborative work.

8. Organize projects where students demonstrate their ability to guide their team to achieve goals.

Conclusion

To sum up, the success of leadership plans can be affected "depending on leader's vision and personal motivation, may in fact lead followers in negative, unethical, and moral directions" (Thomson, 2002, p.75). Hence, depends on the ability of each individual to meet all the planned goals, the effort, dedication, and commitment that the person put to be successful in the achievement of plan goals. The communication of a leader and clear instructions facilitate the effective fulfillment and development of leadership plans since patterns, methods, agreements are established and everyone within the team works collaboratively, coordinate and synchronize for a common goals, even if there are stumbling blocks and the plans are look frustrated, a good leader knows how to overcome adversity and face the challenges that lead his team to success. On the other hand, schools need to innovate in their teaching practices "with the perceived assumption that such innovations will produce identifiable improvements in student achievement" (Wohlstetter & Griffin, 1998, p. 3).

Because generations and cultures evolve according to globalization, for which it is important that schools adapt to new technologies and respond to the new student's needs, leaving behind the traditional way of teaching, thus ensuring the quality of the foreign language requires the professional development of the teacher that is "the process in which individual teachers acquire new knowledge, skills, and values for the constant improvement of the quality of their services" (Kwakman, 1999, p. 53, translated), In this since, teachers performs better they role and applied new inclusive strategies, which allows all students to better develop their skills and abilities.

Reference list

Burnham , J, (2015), *Moral Leadership*, Suffolk, Inglaterra, Continuum.

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. *Academy of management review*, *13*(3), 471-482.

Cote, R. (2017). Vision of effective leadership. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, *14*(4).

Day, C., & Leithwood, K. (Eds.). (2007). *Successful principal leadership in times of change: An international perspective* (Vol. 5). Springer Science & Business Media.

Definition of Empower by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of Empower. (2020). Retrieved 15 November 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/definition/empower

Eddy, P. L., & VanDerLinden, K. E. (2006). Emerging definitions of leadership in higher education: New visions of leadership or same old "hero" leader?. *Community College Review*, *34*(1), 5-26.

Gastil, J. (1994). A definition and illustration of democratic leadership. Human Relations, 47(8), 953-975.

Geijsel, F., Sleegers, P., van den Berg, R., & Kelchtermans, G. (2001). Conditions fostering the implementation of large-scale innovation programs in schools: Teachers' perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *37*(1), 130-166.

Göker, S. D. (December, 2019). Student Leadership 4.0, *Educational Leadership*, Hülya Şenol, IntechOpen, DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.90563. Available from: https://www.intechopen.com/books/educational-leadership/student-leadership-4-0

Hargreaves & Fink (2012). Sustainable leadership (Vol. 6). John Wiley & Sons.

Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: a meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of applied psychology*, *89*(5), 755.

Kouzes & Posner (2006). The leadership challenge (Vol. 3). John Wiley & Sons.

Lai, F. Y., Tang, H. C., Lu, S. C., Lee, Y. C., & Lin, C. C. (2020). Transformational Leadership and Job Performance: The Mediating Role of Work Engagement. SAGE Open, 10(1), 2158244019899085.

Luthans, F., & Avolio, B. J. (2003). Authentic leadership development. *Positive organizational schola* Lubienski, C. (2003). Innovation in education markets: Theory and evidence on the impact of competition and choice in charter schools. *American educational research journal*, *40*(2), 395-443.*rship*, 241, 258.

Northouse P. (2010) Leadership: theory and practice. 5th ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Wolven, J. (2020). 10 Challenges Leaders Always Face And How To Deal With Them. lifehack. https://www.lifehack.org/articles/work/10-challenges-leaders-always-face-and-how-deal-with-them.html