



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS HUMANAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS



A PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

MARIA JOSE POLO GONZALEZ

ISABELLA MARIA ROMERO DELGADO



UNIVERSIDAD DE CÓRDOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

DIPLOMA COURSE

Lifelong Professional Development: Empowering Foreign Language Teachers

MONTERÍA - CÓRDOBA

2020



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

MENTOR

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1. Our Leadership Profile



As English teachers, we are working on ourselves to become every time a more charismatic, empowered and prepared person who is working hard to support students throughout their learning process, as well as teaching and discovering along with them their capabilities to improve themselves and achieve their objectives to succeed not only in personal but in professional life. Besides, we are always constructing an image for our students to see in me a competent and reliable leading source in charge of encourage, motivate and make them see what they can achieve while we teach them to be perseverant, creative, self-directed and to be aware of the sacrifices and patience which are some of the characteristics needed to build up and reinforce their own Leadership ability so that they can help out others around them the same as they were helped.

“A true leader is a source of knowledge, power, wisdom and connectivity with others, through these characteristics the leader will be the guiding light for the others”.

-Isabella Romero & M^a José Polo. Personal leadership statement



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1. Introduction

Throughout decades people have been trying to achieve an accurate definition for the term leadership. In this fashion, Stogdill (1974) declared “there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (p.7); These definitions we might find in dictionaries, online resources and/or other literature are defining leadership from different points of view. Even though these definitions are somehow different from one another, they are not incorrect, they are just kind of personalized and each person decides which definitions they identified with. For instance, we might find leadership defined as the ability a person has of equipping, influencing, training and/or controlling another person or people by sharing their vision of something. We, as humans, have the ability of inspiring others, most of us do not explore and develop this ability while other do, and become what we know as leaders, only through this path of inspiration is when we can share common aims with other people and reinforcing this common things, the group needs to work hard make efforts, passion and dedication.

Bestow Carlyle (1841) leaders are noteworthy people or brave people that are able to use their charisma, wisdom, political and community skills to become powerful and take control or influence others without applying physical strength, only using their positive thoughts, cleverness and proper abilities of communication. Thus, a leader is a person who through his/her abilities make others feel safe, confident and comfortable with themselves



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and others, these capacities of the leader of provoking these feelings in others are considered the basis of an honorable, outstanding leadership process.

There exist different perspectives about leadership that must be taken into account in order to develop a proper leadership process. It is important that students have leadership opportunities during their school life so that they build team relationships with their peers, define personalities and thus be able to achieve activities more efficiently. According to Rodriguez and Villareal (2003) student leadership is “the ability of the student body to influence major decisions about its quality of education and learning environment. Influencing major decisions requires a “listening” and a “valuing” and the incorporation of the ideas that students propose.” In other words, students use leadership to contribute and improve the quality of their education by proposing ideas that will be heard by a leader, who will take these and use them to improve their educational environment.

2. Assumptions

When referring to our assumptions, we as future teachers and leaders have to bear in mind that we need to know our students to have a better conception of what they like and don't like. In this fashion, the fact of knowing our students and their interests will result in positive outcomes not only for them but for us as teachers as well. Not everyone will be a



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leader, due to the special qualities he or she should have, including being able to lead, be passionate, and be an example for the rest of the people and so on.

Now, our leadership development will help us to have a more precise and successful idea about our students in general, not only when they are developing certain kinds of activities, but when they are talking and/or expressing their ideas and thoughts. Students may worry when they are using the second language or simply when they are being observed due to a variety of reasons. For instance, As students' start to grow up they notice the L2 starts to be slightly difficult and therefore they prefer to communicate using a simpler language (L1), besides they are willing to be part of a group of peers and this requires them to speak using the common language so that they answer the calling of their teenagers' needs. (Tarone & Swain, 1995, p. 170). Meanwhile, Gaudart (1992), based on several researches stated that students' rejection and reluctance to use a second language is due to their lack of motivation, and Horwitz et al. (1986) and MacIntyre & Gardner (1989), suggested that when a person starts to speak using an L2 he/she becomes uptight and their speaking will be slower, creating a feeling of frustration and therefore his/her willingness to participate raises due to the uncomfortable feeling of not being fluent. Otherwise speaking, students are the principal focus here, that is to say, we as teachers and leaders try to do the best in our jobs because we want our students to achieve the social, personal and professional goals, not only by means of their mother tongue but in an L2. Therefore, we

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want our students to explore and develop their abilities and skills in another language as well, that is the reason why teachers are expected to focus on the necessities of students in order to come up with new and better ideas and strategies while teaching and developing the lessons. Along these lines, we would like to know how to help and intervene in our students' processes without interruption or create a negative reaction from them towards us and therefore towards the subject.

Reasoning from this fact, nowadays there are several flaws in our education program and education itself. The biggest flaws are that the results of the course aims are not as positive as expected, students do not have the oral proficiency needed for the grade they are in, and most of the teachers are not well prepared in terms of knowing the new approaches for teaching and continue to teach as they considered appropriate. (Valencia, 2007a, p. 7). On the other hand there has been stated that the lack of communication and coordination at national levels in Colombia have been causing issues. For instance, the training days that teachers need to be prepared are reduced and the guides or guidelines are not delivered to schools on time. (Republic of Colombia, 1990). These are mostly the main reasons why teachers play an important role. Based on these flaws we have to look for ideas to help our students to change their minds and to construct a better view from their environment, themselves and school. Besides, our role inspires and impulses us, teachers, to support and encourage our students to do things as they are supposed to be done, to be



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confident and trust their talents and abilities not only in what they know but in other fields. As stated by Hains-Wesson (2011), students reported to feel more interested on learning when the teacher displayed passion to what he/she was developing. Similarly, Felman, (2001); Murphy and Walls, (1994); Tauber and Mester, (2007) stated that teachers' performance techniques affect positively as well as negatively our students' performance and engagement. In this way, we create awareness and stronger personalities in our alumni and we give real meaning to our teaching. This profession demands principally passion, effort and patience, since we may deal with all kinds of students and backgrounds. The different environments we may face could be far from similar, but if we put all our dedication and love to teach, we will succeed and lives will be changed, not only ours but our students' as well.

3. Leadership empowerment and implications for the future

While developing the diploma course we have observed that these topics have enriched us in several ways or aspects including the roles we should take in the classroom. Besides, the syllabus has taken us to look for more information and different points of view when talking about our planning. Additionally, we have had the opportunity to improve ourselves not only as a social being but as a teacher and leader. The diploma course has been useful for us to know how to handle the different situations that we may encounter in the schools.



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especially the public ones. In addition, we have realized how much we have learned since we started to develop our practicum. That is to say, the diploma course has helped us to be better leaders for our students, to be more efficient, to demand more from ourselves, and always do our best, to provide our students a better knowledge, better strategies, and wider views about education and knowledge.

On the other hand, our experience in the schools taught us that as teachers we need to be more than just teachers. We have to be the best leaders since the kids who are growing in schools are all the time looking for the approval of their peers, teachers and older people around them. By being approved students will feel accompanied and confident throughout the learning process. Hence to succeed it is necessary to construct a good communication from student to student and student to teacher, and vice versa, due to the huge impact this aspect has into the students' education. In some occasions it is not easy to construct a good communication with students, maybe for the student's background, context or personalities. It requires patience, responsibility, perseverance and passion from us teachers so that the students feel comfortable and this way they may develop themselves properly within the course and gradually out of the class.



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Conclusion

To sum up, we can state that during this process of learning and teaching we have helped our students to realize they can be better in every aspect they can imagine, including the learning of a second language, which is normally believed to be out of their reach. In parallel we have grown up and improved ourselves as teacher leaders because we have acquired more dominium in our profession. Either way, we consider we are still missing a long path, because every day we learn more and more about how to be a good leader, therefore we are constantly reinventing ourselves and becoming better leaders. We do not consider ourselves as the best leaders worldwide but we are working hard and tidy to get as close to it as possible, and therefore to develop more capacities and skills which can take us to be looked at as a referent or source for many. To conclude, we may say we should not underestimate the learning we may acquire from our students, because this can help us improve our teaching.



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