

elt NOTES

CCA Teachers' Newsletter

UPDATES, TIPS AND RESOURCES

May 2023

From Theory to Practice



THE LEADER IN US

By Pilar Bravo

At this point, you might have already heard plenty about the importance of **leadership** as a soft skill, and the fact that we need to promote it among our students. The issue is, sometimes we don't know how to teach it, or we haven't even been able to develop its potential fully for our own benefit. Again, more than English instructors, we are educators and as such, we lead by example, mainly. What we teach makes a lot more sense when we demonstrate it and when we exemplify it and even better, when we talk from validated experience. Below are a few clarifications and pointers as to how to exercise leadership and inspire others to do the same in our particular context.

What is leadership after all?

We should rather start by clarifying what leadership IS NOT! Leadership has nothing to do with one's position in an organization, with seniority, a title, a lineage, an academic degree, the number of followers in social media or delegation skills. In sum, leadership does not come from authority or power, much less when, rather than earning it, it has been granted to you.

Leadership is a skill anyone can develop and exercise. Also, it stems from influence. More specifically, according to Kevin Kruse (2013), CEO of LEADx, author of Great Leaders Have No Rules and Contributor for Forbes, Leadership is "a process of

social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal". For better understanding, leadership implies the existence of a team; not just a group of people, but a cohesive and diverse team whose relationship is based on confidence, respect, solidarity and committed work. It also implies there is a specific goal to achieve collaboratively. A well-defined goal gives the team purpose, ambition, and motivation.

So, what are examples of teams at the CCA?

There are several, actually, and in all of them you can practice leadership: each one of your classes, the team of PSs and/or ASs, the teachers in a branch, the team of supervisors, the team made up of each one of the supervisors and their supervisees, the Educational Services Leaders, the different groups of friends that teachers have created within the organization, and the list goes on. Have you thought about the potential of influence you have? How many students can you have over a year? How many of their lives can you make a positive change in? How many fellow teachers could you inspire to have a better quality of life or have a better sense of achievement at work? We may not be TikTokers, but the power of our influence is even better appreciated and memorable.



Now, how can I develop and apply leadership at my workplace?

1. Be a Role Model

The best way to influence others is by demonstrating a desired behavior and attitudes. John Maxwell (2014), widely known bestselling author, coach and speaker, asserted that “a leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way”. Furthermore, the better you practice what you preach, the more credibility you earn. And the more credible you are, the more influential you become.

So, try your best to be a role model when it comes to, for example, applying our institutional principles -i.e. transparency, respect and loyalty. Or when showing understanding to your students or coworkers' needs and situations. While still being assertive, reinforcing rules and honoring agreements, sometimes we also need to show empathy to their sometimes-complicated live stories.

This also applies to all the methodological principles we have integrated in our curriculum, such as Socioemotional Learning. Show others how to manage emotions; how to control anger or impatience; how to verbalize needs or dissatisfaction in a constructive way; how not to behave reactively rather than proactively when facing adverse situations; how to stay present even when going through difficult personal or professional problems. How to control anxiety or seek help when needed. Notice we are referring to managing rather than hiding, neglecting, or ignoring emotions. Above all, we are human beings, who are not immune to

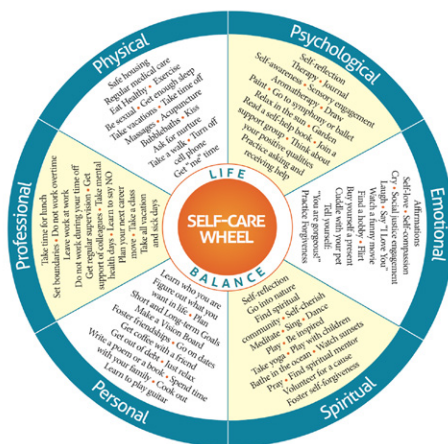
emotions. We have the right to feel, but also, the responsibility to learn how to effectively control how we do that, in a healthy manner.

2. Develop a Growth Mindset

There's nothing more encouraging and rewarding for a human being than growth. And here, we are not only talking about professional growth. Actually, experts claim human nature requires a balance among different dimensions of personal growth and wellbeing. Here's a complete model and some practical ideas to choose from.

Self-Care Wheel

This Self-Care was inspired by and adapted from “Self-Care Assessment Worksheet” from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing for Social Change (2013) Dedicated to all trauma professionals worldwide.



See enlarged image in:

<https://olgaphoenix.com/self-care-wheel/>

Just keep in mind a few additional remarks:

- ✓ This balance will not come to you incidentally. You need to have a feasible plan with short-term and long-term goals and put it in motion.
- ✓ Start with one or two actions per dimension, measure yourself, celebrate progress and recalibrate goals when need be.
- ✓ Growth leads to success; success is inspiring to others; inspiration is a way to exercise the influence that makes change happen in individuals and teams.
- ✓ Maximize Efforts: manage your team and have a clear goal.

Team success starts with a clearly defined goal. What exactly do you want your team, students, friends, or coworkers to achieve? When? How (what's the proposed plan)? Then, it continues by organizing action:

- ✓ Know your team, particular talents, skills, and knowledge they have. Find richness in and take full advantage of the diversity within your team.
- ✓ Assign or suggest roles and tasks.
- ✓ Establish norms to ensure respectful and assertive communication, for instance.
- ✓ In the case of your role as leader of your students, offer or facilitate training. Monitor their work, re-direct, when need be, offer effective feedback and allow for formative assessment.

Simon Sinek says great leaders are not responsible for the results; we are responsible for the people who are responsible for the results. Your students' end result is to learn by using the resources you suggest, the knowledge you share and the skills, autonomy included, that you help them develop. You're a guide, a mentor, a motivator...an influencer! They are the ones who decide to make growth and success happen.

A tourism-oriented program in Boyacá.

Experiences, challenges, and strategies

By Luis Mejía - Colombo Teacher



“Including Social-Emotional Learning as well as 21st century skills in our lesson plans is not a whim, but a game-changing strategy to help our students flourish and overcome those adverse scenarios.”

Tourism has played a huge role in generating new job opportunities after the signing of the peace accord in Colombia and the covid-19 pandemic. As expected, the beautiful landscapes and the natural richness of our country has attracted many tourists from all over the world. However, it has also posed big challenges to policy makers and different educational institutions to meet one of its most important demands: to have a qualified bilingual workforce. The Centro Colombo Americano has responded to these demands by offering a tourism-oriented program addressed to some students in public schools in Boyacá, Colombia.

Participating in this program has allowed teachers to realize the importance of addressing Social-Emotional Learning and 21st Century Skills in their classes in order to face the reality of education in some remote areas of the country. Some challenges posed by this context are students’ general lack of motivation, and lack of training on how to use technological facilities and devices for learning purposes. Let’s see some activities and strategies used by teachers to broaden students’ perspectives about the world, and to help them develop some digital literacy skills.

On one hand, when we talk about occupations in our classes, we like to ask

our students what they would like to be in the future, expecting enthusiastic answers, full of hope and dreams. That was not the case in one rural school from this program. At first, students found it hard to talk about their future since their perspectives were narrowed by their work experience as waiters or agricultural labourers. However, after learning more about different occupations and being exposed to the activities people from other countries do, the students were asked to make a drawing about what they thought their lives were going to be like in 10 years. The results were astounding since some of them even said they were considering becoming English teachers. This shows the relevance of providing students with the right input. Not only does it allow students to use new vocabulary in a foreign language, but also, to have a different outlook in life.



On the other hand, very often teachers take for granted their students know how to use technology correctly, so completing exercises on the online platform will be a piece of cake for them. Not so fast! Besides the struggle of trying to get their mobile data to work in rural areas, students need to be trained on how to use those platforms and how to develop self-study routines to make the most out of those tools. However, what about using the websites and apps they are familiarized with and use them as educational tools? Students were asked to create an Instagram post or a Tik Tok video describing their daily routines. They had tons of fun taking the pictures and making the video, while using English to talk about their lives.

Although the messy banana splits and failed karaoke sessions were not addressed directly in this article, these activities are key for building rapport with our students and keeping our classes fresh and exciting. Including Social-Emotional Learning as well as 21st century skills in our lesson plans is not a whim, but a game-changing strategy to help our students flourish and overcome those adverse scenarios. This is why I would like to encourage my fellow teachers to embark on new journeys, face new challenges, and come up with nice ways to empower your student to build a better country.

Teacher Voice

Empowering the Youth in Puerto Boyacá

to Build their Dreams with the transformational force of Bilingualism

By Fernando Cano Colombo Teacher



English is a tool that can definitely open many doors. This is a fact. No matter where you are or who you are. But the drastic changes that English can have in one's life hadn't been so evident to me than the moment I came to Puerto Boyacá.

A scorching sun welcomes visitors to a town that is progressing from war to more peaceful times. Students whose families have been in the town for one or perhaps two generations, but that come from other places, looking for new opportunities or victims of unfair violence. There is a new story in every corner; and students are the ones working towards their own future, shaping their own stories.

According to what students have said, most English classes they have had so far are mainly about translating, repeating after the teacher, or monotonous writing tasks. Having the opportunity now of acquiring

learning strategies, active communication, and tasks has been a positive change. Many students have told me how they haven't done that well at English at their schools, but that they finally feel like they are learning; that they are beginning to understand how to use the language. It is becoming a tool rather than something that we just need to translate.

Of course, there are tons of learning techniques. But so far, students have liked having the opportunity of communicating, playing with the language, and understanding that there's a wider world out there. When asking them about the future, they say they have bigger plans now, and that this language is a tool to help them achieve their dreams. There are more stories to tell, but I'm also looking forward to discovering the stories they will write in the paths they follow using the skills they are learning today.

What else is News?



English To Fly: Teaching as an act of constant learning

By Laura Esquivel - Colombo Teacher

The English to Fly (ETF) program classes have already started with 25 visually impaired students who love their teacher, Laura Esquivel. It was officially launched last May 8th. Laura would like an inspiring reflection about her experience so far:

As teachers, we rarely ask ourselves how we could teach diverse kinds of populations. Particularly, how visually impaired students could learn EFL and how we can make them participate actively in the different

activities and scenarios we usually have at the Colombo. Surely, the English to Fly Program has become a positive challenge for all Colombo community members to think about innovative ways to address our students' needs step by step. Also, it can help us become better aware of the fact that EFL teaching is a golden opportunity to make a change and show them they have great abilities to be part of today's bustling world. One of the most relevant lessons we can get from these students is that they should not always be the ones who need to adapt

to everything around them. All of us can make meaningful adjustments to transform our methodology for them. This program is a reminder about the power of teaching EFL as it implies a constant act of learning from our students and discovering who they are to enhance their most valuable skills and acknowledge the best of them. ETF program at CCA is proof that if we continue promoting these opportunities, the world surrounding us will be ready for every kind of student sooner than expected.



Can we contribute to a more sustainable world from the English Classroom?

By Pilar Bravo

“... ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.”
<https://sdgs.un.org/>

In one of our previous issues, we briefly mentioned the United Nations’ SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). However, we have realized how little our educational community knows about them and how important it is for us to start contributing to their achievement. Also, we would like to share with you all a very useful repository of information, resources, and lesson plans one of the publishing houses we currently work with has created and left at our disposal. We hope you find the following definition and resources useful to understand how we can make a little difference from our classrooms and support the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 17 SDGs are the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agenda was what all United Nations Member States, developed and developing, came up with in 2015, to work collaboratively towards peace, wellbeing and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. More specifically, they address global issues pertaining to topics such as the ones in the following graphic:

Our teachers might be wondering what all this has to do with what we do. Well, a lot! We are already aware of the need to teach more than just English. We are teaching skills that go beyond just the communicative competence in English. We have included socioemotional skills, global skills and intercultural competence in the newest curricular projects, which contributes to our objective to prepare our students, adults and children, to become active global citizens that work towards



a more sustainable future. We have projects, discussions, and debates about global issues. Our students are prompted to propose ideas and express their opinions about said issues. Additionally, the newest textbooks have already incorporated content to promote SDGs. Publishing houses have pioneered this process because they also understand their mission to help educate in SDGs. We just see the need to bring this topic up more explicitly and have a more active participation in the achievement of these objectives. Let's become more knowledgeable about this global effort. Let's make students more aware of it and of the need to contribute their own actions and initiatives.

To facilitate understanding and practice of the SDGs in the English classroom, Macmillan Education has come up with Advancing Futures as a comprehensive program designed to introduce the topics of global citizenship, sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion into classrooms around the world. More specifically, it helps teachers share knowledge, develop skills, and promote attitudes and actions to bring about positive and lasting change. It engages students with key elements of the SDGs and empowers them to work towards a fairer, more sustainable future.

Here's a brief summary of the resources teachers can find on this website:

- ✓ **Lesson plans and worksheets:** material with very practical ideas on how to take care of the planet, our health and well-being, promote equity, etc.
- ✓ **Skills cards:** Cards with discussion topics or case studies to help students develop skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, initiative, etc.
- ✓ **Webinars and panel discussions** by experts on topics such as Global Citizenship.
- ✓ **Blogs:** For teachers around the world to share their insights about sustainability and education.
- ✓ **Change Makers:** A new teacher and student initiative for all of them to participate in projects that really make a change and inspire others.
- ✓ **Changing the world from our classrooms:** A series of free live online lessons for students by Change Makers Ambassador Harry Waters.

We could go on, but it will be much more enriching for teachers to explore Advancing Futures and have first-hand experience with all the resources offered. We hope you enjoy it!

More info visit: <https://www.macmillanenglish.com/co/advancingfutures/home>

Tips for CCA Teachers

Reserve and Make the Most of the Mediations

By Mediators

1

RESERVATION TIPS

- **Time Management:** Coordinate the mediation time with your class schedule to avoid conflicts.
- **Check Mediator Calendar:** Access the mediator's calendar and reserve a suitable time slot for their process.
- **Early Access:** Visit the reservation page on Monday mornings to check availability for the upcoming two weeks.
- **Choose Correct Day and Branch:** Select the appropriate weekday and branch based on your course type (e.g., KTP Midweek, Semi-intensive).
- **Have a Backup Plan:** Teachers should have a contingency plan in case the mediator is unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.



2

NAVIGATION & EXPLORATION

- **1. Select Mediation Level/Process:** Begin by choosing the desired mediation level, process, or modality using the search bar tool if needed.
- **2. Review Options:** Explore the provided options and review their characteristics.
- **3. Choose Date and Time:** Navigate the calendar and select a preferred date and time for the mediation.
- **4. Submit Request Form:** Fill out and submit the request form at least two days in advance, and you'll receive a confirmation email.



3

POST-RESERVATION PROCESS

- **Inform Mediators:** Send an email to inform the mediators of any specific features or considerations related to your course or student population.

4

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

- **Engage Actively:** Take an active role in the mediation, participate in activities, keep your camera on, and remain attentive to offer assistance when needed.
- **Online Sessions:** Make the mediator a co-host when they join your class for online sessions to enable them to manage features like breakout rooms.
- **Assist Mediators:** Help mediators monitor conversations and breakout rooms when requested.
- **Allow Mediator to Manage:** Avoid interrupting the mediation or taking over classroom management tasks, as it can disrupt the flow. Let the mediator handle these responsibilities.



5

AT THE END...

- **Provide Feedback:** Fill out the evaluation form, offering your honest feedback on the mediation experience.
- **Student Feedback:** If the mediation involves KTP F2F courses, especially with kids or teens, consider sharing the evaluation link for student surveys through platforms like Q10, WhatsApp groups, or emails to gather their feedback as well.



General ELT Notes References

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