



## The Role of the Teacher in the Educational Process: reflections on the theme

Vera Queiroz

Before thinking about the teacher as a leader in the educational process, one must define the term leader.

According to **Longman Language Activator**, a leader is someone that a group of people chooses to represent them or be in charge of them.

Based on this definition, the leader is the one who has the function of guiding the group to achieve the established objectives and the expected results, which in the case of education, are the learning objectives and outcomes.

An issue that also commonly arises is whether the leadership function is innate or learned and developed.

While some experts consider leadership to be something innate, others claim that one learns to be a leader. Professor

Dr. Ronald E. Riggio, a renowned expert in leadership and organizational psychology, says leadership is acquired. Of the same opinion is Dr. Graham Wilson, a behavioral scientist. Leadership can be worked on, developed, and improved.

In contemporary society, the role of the teacher, traditionally seen as the sole guider of the educational process, gives way to the teacher who orients the teaching and learning process with the partnership and collaboration of the students.

The teacher as a leader must have the following characteristics:

1. To have transparency, that is, to make clear the objectives of the studies, the expectations about the students, the methods of individual and group evaluation, and the individual and collective learning outcomes.
2. To have empathy, that is, to know how to put oneself in the other's shoes. To have the ability to evaluate each student's behavior that can compromise the teaching and learning process. And to develop in the students this same feeling of empathy towards their colleagues.
3. To create environments of trust and belonging, that is, pleasant environments for individual and collaborative work.
4. To define and set rules in advance with the agreement and help of the students.
5. To be willing to work together with the students, accepting to be the mediator of the teaching and learning process and not the only source of knowledge, as traditionally done by the teacher.
6. To build an atmosphere of motivation and respect in and with the group.
7. To help students be autonomous learners who search for different sources of knowledge in varied resources and media and share them with their colleagues.
8. To take the challenges and risks of not having all the answers ready and known and seek partnership with the students. Also, to stimulate a horizontal educational process and no longer a vertical one.
9. Accept "errors" and see them as signs of your learning for improvement and future success.
10. To realize and create conditions for the joint resolution of conflicts that may arise throughout the educational process.

*The leader guides the group to achieve the established objectives and the expected outcomes.*



11. To know how to listen to opposing arguments and validate them, or present counterarguments, justifying the reasons. And teach students to do the same by listening, debating, and counter-arguing (when appropriate) respectfully.
12. To provide clear guidelines for the students to follow in the educational process (of where to go and where to end), not sticking to pre-established paths. To change routes is a possibility to take.
13. To make room for students to participate and grow in their learning rhythms and times, thus making the ways and means of learning more flexible.
14. To motivate the individual contributions and experiences of each student and the shares with the group.
15. To encourage the different knowledge and experiences brought by the students in their social and cultural baggage acquired in the environments from which they came.
16. To enhance students' skills and competencies, making it clear that each individual has or improves different skills and competencies throughout life and that this is each one's contribution to the whole.
17. To evaluate each student's potential and respect their ideas, arguments, interests, and insights.
18. To prize collaboration and cooperation, relevant tools for facing the demands of today's world.
19. To create conditions for socio-behavioral skills the student and the group should develop.
20. To create an environment of collaboration, interest, motivation, and empathy among everyone - an environment where the group feels welcome and has a sense of belonging at its core.

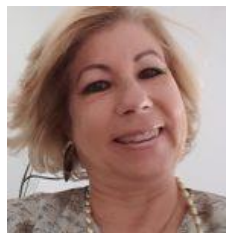
All these different characteristics permeate a fundamental and central element, which is communication. The communication must always be clear, precise, and objective, leaving no room for doubts, queries, and disagreements.

Good communication solves possible conflicts and guarantees positive relationships of commitment and actions between students and teachers.

This way of teaching and leading, which guides, assists, listens to the students, and makes them active participants in the learning process, brings benefits and is a form of leadership that is respected and valued by the students, once they are integral parts of the educational process.

The teacher must know his/her students. Also, the students must know each other and their teacher. Thus, leadership brings effective outcomes and group engagement. It also builds collaboration, cooperation, empathy, and trust between the students and the teacher.

The teacher's self-knowledge influences and helps the students to create straighter interpersonal bonds. And this is fundamental to the educational process as a whole and to reach the searched learning outcomes.



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This article is a result of the author's ascertainment and analysis, without compulsorily reflecting CEST's opinion.