***Prompt 1 - Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.* (350 words)**

As part of my school’s community program, I was tasked with helping the staff in cleaning the school after dismissals. During breaks, we would get together and talk as Maya, one of the janitors, spoke of her past. Hailing from a remote village, her school didn’t provide English courses and working here at our school, where English was spoken everywhere, slowly piqued her interest in studying English.

“Imagine if I had learned English, maybe I could have been a teacher here,” she said jokingly.

The conversation I had with them made me realize the privilege of studying English that I took for granted. Wanting to share this privilege prompted me to start an English tutoring program. I started recruiting my friends to help me with a promise of free snacks after sessions. We coordinated with the English teachers to create a suitable syllabus, and coordinated with the staff members to work out a schedule.

For a year, we mentored the Janitors thrice a week. We started with basic nouns, verbs, adjectives, and then slowly transitioned to compound and complex sentences as they got more comfortable. I would often facilitate group studies among the staff, task them with discussing a topic using English, set up long-term group projects to promote teamwork, and allow them to learn not only from me, but their peers as well. Being the leader of the mentorship team, I had to constantly make adjustments to many factors such as the staff’s and volunteer’s availability and make sure every part of the program was in sync like gears in a machine.

This experience opened my eyes to the importance of fostering a collaborative environment. Similar to how gears had to cooperate perfectly with each other to achieve a motor’s desirable product, there were many “gears” in the form of their respective progress or their mental state; whether they’re too stressed or overwhelmed, I had to take those into consideration. As the leader, I was the gear with the source of motion, kickstarting the journey and making sure every gear was supportive to the growth of the staff members.