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### How I Embodiment the Characteristics of a Leader

The school experience has a great bearing on one's future. How you felt in those 4 years can shape your attitudes and beliefs. During my freshman year, I felt like I had been swallowed up by this new experience. It was hard to make new friends and forget old habits that should have been left in elementary school. I hadn't felt like I belonged until one day I joined the Varsity Girls soccer team. It was in this team that I was able to make friends and learn from the seniors. Their leadership during that time shaped the way I wanted to be seen when I was older. Thankfully, even with everything going on last year with the virus, I was able to take what I learned since first becoming a freshman as a part of a group and put it to use.

At the beginning of my grade 12 year, I was offered the opportunity to become an educational lead for a new HOSA club at my school. It stands for Health Occupations Students of America. This was a club in which students would be taught various information about health science topics, to then compete in two separate conference competitions in Toronto. The club's president, in addition to Science and English faculty members, chose me to lead the researched persuasive writing and speaking sector of the competition. This meant that I would teach students from grade 9 to 12 about literacy skills that would help them in their endeavor. Our sector was given a prompt by the organization, in which the students had to answer with a research paper and speech. As their educational lead I made lessons and interactive PowerPoints that taught them about proper literary structure, citations, and how to present a speech presentation. This gave me an opportunity to widen my scope on how I can reach people and become an educator.

Sadly, due to the coronavirus, a club that would usually meet in person was put to online remote learning. This meant that I had to take extra steps as their leader to educate them in a manner that would cater to their situations and overall mental health at this time. Due to that setback, I made it a point to gain an in-depth relationship with my students so that they would be comfortable sharing their ideas. The overall goal was to create a space that would encourage strategic thinking and innovative ideas. My willingness to listen and understand, resulted in my students being more engaging with participation and going out of their comfort zones. Even as a high school student myself, with a huge workload in assignments, I made it important to set aside time in which I would give extra advice and help to students who needed clarification after a class lesson.

Sometimes when individuals are given a role that warrants them educating and taking leadership within their peers, they are afraid to risk relationships and status, so they don't act objectively. In leading my students to success, I felt that being honest constructively was the best way to truly foster great learners. In terms of what made such leadership exemplary, it was my willingness to listen and the perspective that I was able to provide to help my students. Being a current student in their school, who is about to graduate, allowed me to relate to their hesitations and problems. During our fall conference competition in December, one of my students, Lillian, was able to place 9th in the top 10, with my other students reviving great scores on their research paper. I took this review as a way for them to not only learn from their past work, but as an opportunity for me to learn from my previous ways of teaching. This allows me to improve on my skills as an educator and learn from strategies that I used that might not have been as efficient and effective as I had hoped.