

Personal Educational Philosophy

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Zipporah Johnson

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My career and educational mission statement is to, through the ethical practice of research, use theories, analysis, and designing technology-enabled, universally accessible interventions to enhance learning and performance. In the future, this statement will heavily impact how I will conduct myself professionally as an employee and in any managerial role I am given since a mission or vision statement should be the driving force of change. “Vision is actually a function of the organization’s environment- internal and external.”(Adeyoyin et al., 2011). Breaking the statement down, going over specific questions, and highlighting what it means to be in a leadership position gives a fuller understanding of the driving forces behind what manager I will most likely be.

First, my mission statement is based on clear values: ethical practice, universal accessibility, learning, and technology. Further highlighting these key terms, ethical practice, first it should be mentioned that with a background of seven years in high school and college forensics, philosophy is second nature. Asking the why behind, wanting an explanation of why it is done a particular way, and searching for the morality principle behind each problem. It also goes into the first core competency of librarianship American Library Association (2009) (para. 1.1): “The ethics, values, and foundational principles of the library and information profession.” It is discerning the ethical lens in which a person views the world that takes into more excellent account what kind of decisions they will make and what manager they will be. I view the world from what I call a Christian skeptic; due to my upbringing, faith is a part of my life and is reflected in my values. Ethical principles often reflect the teachings of Jesus, but being a skeptic, there are some I would depart from what I call traditional Christian values, like LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, and other topics. Part of this goes to experiences in the past with people, seeing what

they have gone through and opening my eyes to the more fantastic world around me. Justified through, “The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (*New International Version*, 2011, Mark 12:31). Jesus says this after being questioned by a person who teaches about God, which is the most important commandment, expecting Jesus to be caught in a trap. Instead of referring to one of the Ten Commandments, his answer gives the following command: people should love God and their neighbor. (*New International Version*, 2011, Mark 12). Loving is difficult; when a neighbor is obnoxious, showing compassion is the right thing to do, which is why loving neighbors in my mission creates universal accessibility.

Universal accessibility is a term that means to give equitable access. Achieving accessibility in the real world is very different, with different obstacles like funding and support. Accessibility is important to me because of my personal experience with my sister, who has physical and learning disabilities. Experiencing the world with her and friends is sometimes difficult and frustrating, finding that buildings do not have working elevators or other basic accommodations. Public schools, which should have resources, need to have adequately trained teachers. I was experiencing this for myself, with my mental and physical health struggles, feeling like there must be a better way. Like the University of Illinois Chicago-University Library, they put together a portal that takes employees through accessibility training (University of Illinois Chicago- University Library, 2024). Doing research and gaining some experience in the area has furthered my understanding of the need for monetary funding, which is lacking. In addition, support from not only the community of individuals and care support but also people outside recognizing the need and advocating for a better future for everyone. Part of this is also knowing that being a library manager may mean finding ways to overcome a lack of diversity by

training or hiring different employees to reflect better the patrons served. (Vela, 2018). Universal accessibility is one part of creating accessible spaces both online and offline; the other part is advocating for universal accessibility.

Learning and technology are values that go together due to how everything comes together in my career future. I am pursuing a dual master's in library and information science with instructional design and technology. Other than being more qualified later when I reach my goal of working in the collegiate academic field and one day getting a Ph.D., the links between the two fields are the reason behind this. More and more libraries are becoming more community spaces combined with information hubs. This is not new, as a core competency of American Library Association (2009) (para. 7B) "The role of the library in the lifelong learning of patrons, including an understanding of lifelong learning in the provision of quality service and the use of lifelong learning in the promotion of library services." Due to this, libraries are educational learning centers for many communities for many topic areas. Academic libraries are transforming into combination study areas and some innovation centers for students to explore new technologies. One such school taking this up is Penn State, where they have sensory rooms that students can book for 90- minutes and also provide sensory backpacks for checkout. Penn State University Libraries (2023). With libraries becoming more user-centered and focused on what information patrons receive or are fed, librarians should have more skills in instructing patrons and designing instruction for libraries. A manager possesses these skills to create programming for a library and teach other librarians how to enhance the user accessibility of a future library.

These values shape the type of manager that I want to be in the future. I have some leadership experience from student organizations and volunteer events, but not on a day-to-day,

yearly basis. Keeping up a leadership position for a long time takes a certain amount of skills. A whole section is dedicated to administration and management from the ALA core competencies, clearly stating that it is a vital role in the library profession. (American Library Association, 2009). Currently, the skills that I possess are a more analytical approach and better adaptability. This is important because library strategic planning and assessment are essential and have similar steps to business plans. (Dole, 2013). It is not surprising, but we were a part of the test results of a quiz by Harvard Business (McKee, 2015). From this, I learned I need to grow in positive outlook and emotional self-control, again, not a surprise. After evaluating, through the metrics, that these quizzes are like doctors give for depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns, it was no surprise I came up short. The good part about this is that by seeking help from mental health professionals and looking to peers and mentors in the area, I have gained a better perspective of the issues that can take hold. For instance, if a manager has a judging or negative attitude, this can turn into a toxic triangle and breed workplace negativity. (Moran et al., 2018, p. 339). From this, employees can feel worthless or helpless, which is not a healthy environment; instead, encouraging employees and finding out what they best respond to will improve the workplace, including Maslow's hierarchy of needs and applying this to employees so that all can reach the highest level possible, making sure that managers make employees feel empowered and needed. (Moran et al., 2018, p. 316). Part of this includes ensuring that librarians do not experience burnout since it is so prevalent in the profession due to emotional exhaustion and stress. Having enjoyable work parts, like other coworkers, incentives, and job satisfaction, can decrease burnout. (Casucci et al., 2020).

The shape of a manager comes from not only the values but also the model and style they use in the workplace. After different experiences in public and academic libraries, with managers

who had varying leadership styles and learning the names of these, has landed on a combination of models and styles of management to use. First is decentralized management, essentially delegating decision-making. (Moran et al., 2018, p. 181). The style comes from the 1980s when management structures were questioned because of their hierarchical nature, which seems similar to governments like monarchies. Distasteful to employees and some managers, these were reformed based on the governmental ideals of democracy and delegating. Delegating is based on the philosophy of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776, which teaches the importance of specialization of staff positions, departments, and delegation. (Moran et al., 2018, p. 167). Along with John Locke tied so close to the United States and established the foundation for democracy, later hierocracy. (Moran et al., 2018, p. 200). For example, in decentralized management, one manager can only make some decisions; it takes a team of people to run a library, so delegating decision-making is an important skill and a fundamental management model. In this version of leadership, employees are heard and involved in the decision-making process, and occasionally, lower levels of management make decisions on their own, which is very gratifying. Delegating decision-making to department heads, project leaders, or shift leaders can save time and is often better. (Moran et al., 2018, p. 182). In addition, patrons may feel that employees have the knowledge to answer questions and guide them, which is the essential job of librarians. Unwittingly, it would serve as the foundation for workers' unions and less hierarchical businesses. Based on the old theories, this model lends itself to a workplace where employees and patrons are cared for because they are listened to. Taking the time to listen to people is very important, as it helps to find out what is happening and implement the right changes if necessary.

As a manager practicing ethical research, I use theories and analysis and design technology-enabled, universally accessible interventions to enhance learning and performance.

This requires implementing values to shape decision-making and help with ethical decision-making. I acknowledge what skills need to be worked on and how to create the best employee environment. They are finding the model and style of management not only to hold for themselves but also for your organization.

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