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Why ELI?

ELI is a unique class that offers the chance to deal directly with real life and provide instant gratification.

Why Not?

When I applied to ELI I knew only the basics about the program. I knew there were class seminars on various topics devoted to leadership, a community service project and an individual project. At the first meeting of ELI our class was given a binder that was virtually empty with exception to the course syllabus and dividers. We knew the basics of the class but we had no idea the specifics of what each speaker would say or do. With each week the binder became heavier and my perception of leadership deepened and gained clarity.

For me, determining my leadership type (ENFP) was one of the most beneficial activities because I then knew my strengths and weaknesses. Once I knew more about myself I learned I could use my strengths to improve problems where my passions lied. As Lao-Tzu said. "One who knows others is wise. One who knows oneself is enlightened." However, the most lasting influence on me will remain the group project at Salvation Army and my individual project because they are concrete examples of what one can do to impact others.

Impact

As a result of ELI I have gained new insight on my potential to make a difference. At the beginning of the semester I had a vague idea of what my individual project might entail. As John Mason says, "You have to know what you want in order to attain it." I knew I wanted to impact the growing Hispanic community in Lexington, but did not know how. Therefore, I went on a mission of gathering information to increase my knowledge in order to pinpoint the focus of need. I found there was an uninformed community which was creating confusion and problems in the school system with Hispanics. I created a network of people with the same concerns as me and even motivated others to share my concerns. From there on my project took shape and still continues to develop as I share the knowledge I have acquired with others. From this I have learned the simple act of providing information can impact the quality of other people's lives. In conclusion, I learned how to recognize my passions, identify problems, find solutions and then maintain commitment to my objectives.

What Now?

I am leaving ELI with a new awareness of what it means to be a leader. I realize that the world is full of issues that are just waiting to be addressed by potential leaders. By being fortunate enough to be in ELI I have learned that everyone holds this potential. I leave ELI having met a group of amazing new friends and a network of leaders from the community. Most importantly, I leave knowing this class will leave a lasting impact on the direction of my future.