

ELI FINAL PAPER
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December 9, 2003

“A Revelation of Change”

Hi, my name is Michelle Bishop and I am a sophomore who just participated in the Emerging Leader Institute. This class has been one of the most life-changing experiences that I have had since I have been on campus. In this class you are not just overwhelmed with amazing lecturers you are required to challenge your individual abilities and potential. It is a time in your life where you can really search to find what your purpose is and then they lead you in the direction to carry it out.

In the class, each person is required to develop and carry out their own leadership project. I chose to focus mine on alcohol awareness among local high schools. We all know how it feels to be preached at over and over and my conclusion is it does not work. The method I wanted to use for my project was a fun atmosphere where college students do all of the talking and by no means would they preach.

While I have been in college I have been lucky enough to participate in lots of organizations. However, one particular organization became extremely helpful with my project and they are the CAUSE (College Alcohol Use Student Educators). This is an organization that goes around campus and does programs for students making them aware of the statistics of drinking and how to drink responsibly and the consequences if you do not. We have teamed up to complete my project of going into a high school. We first determined to go into Henry Clay high school because we had contacts with their Parent Teacher Association. Our next step was to get the approval of the principal, in order to be able to go into the schools. This is not an easy task because when you go into

high schools you have to be extremely careful with what you say and how you say it. Therefore, we knew we needed to test the program on students before we actually brought it into the schools to hear their feedback and this is exactly what we did a week ago. We developed an in-depth program to follow a script for a fifty minute class period for Henry Clay juniors.

When we actually performed the program in front of Henry Clay high school students it went well. They gave us positive feedback on the program and suggestions they had to make it even better and more effective. My next step is to bring it to the principal to get approval and then bring it into the classrooms the week before Spring Break. We thought this time in the year would be the most appropriate because it is typically when a lot of drinking will be going on.

Part of the program's goal is also to educate the student's on the effects of alcohol and the serious consequences behind high-risk drinking. An excerpt from the script we will be using is as follows:

Things you need to know about alcohol

1. Definition of a drink
 - Beer: 12 ounces (not a Brutus from BW3's)
 - Wine: 4 ounces
 - Hard liquor/spirits: 1 ounceYour body can process 1 drink per hour!

2. Adjust for individual differences
 - i.e. height, weight, male/female, mood, sleepy
3. Medications and alcohol – never mix the two unless you have permission from your doctor! 2 things can happen
 - a. alcohol may undue what your medication should be doing
 - b. medication may alter the effect of the alcohol – could get drunker much faster or it could make you sick
4. Empty stomach/full stomach
5. Drinking and abstract thinking

One night of drinking to the point of impairment can affect your abstract thinking for up to 72 hours. In other words, if you drink on a Wednesday night and have a test Friday morning, the alcohol from Wednesday can affect your performance on your test even though the alcohol is no longer in your system.

We are hoping that when the students hear these facts it will make them realize that it is important to only drink 1 per hour (low-risk) for their own safety.

Another aspect of the program is we are going to have them read scenarios and discuss in a group what the people could have done different. An example of this is:

On a Friday night, Melissa, a petite 5'3" girl, and her close friends wanted to have fun. They heard of a field party that was going to be that night. There were about a hundred of people at the party, and it seemed like everyone there was drinking. Melissa started drinking beer from a keg. After filling her cup up twice she started feeling warm and relaxed, but she still kept on drinking. After the fourth time of filling her cup up, she had problems walking, standing still, talking, and she started to vomit. Then, Brad, a 6'2" large male, challenged Melissa to a drinking game and she agreed. She thought she could handle the alcohol because she thought she had vomited most of it up. Brad and Melissa would drink a shot and then drink a cup of beer. Even though Melissa was becoming sick, confused, and lightheaded she kept on drinking because she wanted to prove herself. Then Melissa started throwing up and she passed out. Her breathing became slower and her skin was cold, clammy, and bluish.

Questions:

1. What symptoms did Melissa have from drinking alcohol?
2. What could Melissa have done to not possess these symptoms?
3. When should Melissa have stopped drinking?
4. How would alcohol affect Melissa and Brad differently?
6. What should Melissa's friends do?

Hopefully, the students will be able to relate to these scenarios and questions and it will help them better understand their choices that they are making on a day to day basis, can affect them for the rest of their life physically and emotionally.

The impact that this project has had on me has been tremendous. I have grown as a person and a leader with this project developing my communication skills, organizing, and staying motivated to carry the project out. This project was a large one to take on but with the CAUSE's help it has made everything ten times better. They have been the backbone of this project and without them I know I would not be this far with what I wanted to do. It is amazing what can happen when you get a group of motivated students together who want to make a difference in the community. We have all worked together smoothly and gotten everything done in a timely manner and we are definitely where we need to be at this point in the project.

I learned also that you cannot do everything in life by yourself. I have been very guilty of trying to accomplish so many things by myself and this can get you in trouble faster than anything because some tasks are not made to be done solo. Especially with my ELI project it needed to be a team effort and it was! It took a lot for me to realize that I could not do the entire thing by myself, even though I may have wanted to. I had to break loose and say "Yes, I will accept help." This is absolutely huge for me because I am incredibly independent. I feel through this class it did help me to realize that my independence can be a downfall if I let it. The key is knowing when to use it and when not to (which I am learning still).

Another major lesson I learned through this class is knowing when to lead and knowing when to follow. A skilled leader has to know how to step back and know when it is his turn to lead and also to realize that if he is not the right person to lead to allow someone else to pick up and run with the group. This is often hard for domineering leaders, such as myself, who feel they have to be in control of all situations and especially

groups and organizations. It is just one of the many traits that come along with being a “D” personality. I truly feel that through this class and listening to the different seminars I am more willing to trust someone else to do the job now. I also realize that I absolutely cannot do it all! This is hard for a type A personality to realize because we love to conquer the world and then do it again when we are done. I have learned that it is better to pace yourself, and put your time and energy into a few things you are passionate about, rather than spread yourself out like a piece of paper in 20 different organizations. You will get a lot more accomplished by only doing a few things and you will feel more satisfied with your own performance.

Overall, this class has been an eye-opener because I was at the point where I needed to change the way I was, if not I would not survive four years of torturing myself. What I mean is if I kept up the pace I was going I would have had a mental breakdown by the time I was 21. There is some fire and passion in me that gives me the ambition to try and do as many things as I possibly can. Such as: juggle 8 organizations, 18 hours of class, 12 hours of work a week, and try to please everyone around me. I quickly learned it is impossible to do all of those things and be happy. So what did I do? I changed. I cut back on what I did and tried to satisfy myself rather than everyone else for once. The result was a much happier and less stressed Michelle. I almost had forgotten what it felt like, which is a scary thing. Thanks to the Emerging Leader Institute I know I am a better leader and even a better follower. The person I have become is definitely a nice change from the person I was. The “new Michelle” will leave a deeper impact on this campus in a much more effective way than I ever could have without ELI!