

Steve Cavezza

ELI Final Summary Paper

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I had absolutely no idea what I was getting into when I applied for this class. When I was in high school, I was always a leader. I knew I wanted to be a leader in college, and this just seemed like a great place to start. I was not sure how it would help me, but the brochure said it would so I went in with an open mind. Now that the class is complete, I cannot even begin to describe the many ways this class has not only changed my leadership, but also my college experience as a whole, and even my life. If it were not for ELI, I would probably be transferring to another college next semester. I gained so much knowledge and insight that is not taught, but rather handed to you and you must decide how to use it. I networked in a way I never thought possible, especially for an out-of-state freshman. I made good friends for life. I could go on and on. The fact of the matter is I got all of this from a class. This is an invaluable experience that will change your life if you allow it to. You get out what you put in, and I got a whole lot out of my ELI class this semester.

We did a lot in ELI. The classes sometimes seemed strange, and I often found myself asking, "Why are we doing this?" But it's one of those things that you don't

realize how it effected you or what you learned until you look back on it. Whether it be an hour later, a couple days later, or a month later, you will use what you learned. You may not even know it, but you will do it. ELI just makes you a better person.

There were so many different aspects of the class it's hard to touch on everything I got from it, and some things just cannot be explained in words, it would not do the class justice. However I can briefly tell you some of the things I learned, and I will go into more detail later on. I learned to be more ethical in my decision making and take into account everyone's opinions. I also learned some mediation techniques and how to sit back and assess a situation then come up with a productive solution. We talked about diversity and stereotypes and learned about their effects on our society and each of us personally. I learned a lot about myself too. Being a leader all my life I always took a somewhat dominant approach. I learned that I do not always have to use this leadership technique, and also that I am capable of going about things in different ways. I learned a lot about communicating my ideas and getting them across to the public through bureaucracy, which I found very interesting personally. I came to realize what it is that I really value in life, and think about whether or not I'm focused on the right aspects of my life. Finally, last but not least, I learned a lot about having an action plan and sticking to it. Through my individual leadership project I was able to develop my own vision and learned a lot about time management and making contacts.

Now I'll go into more detail as to all these things that I learned. The one thing that

seems to stick out in my mind the most and that really made a lot of sense to me was the DISC profile that Rhonda Strouse gave us. This personal profiling system gave me insight into myself, my personal behavior, and mostly my leadership style. As I mentioned before, my results showed that my leadership was focused on dominance. By dominance, what it was saying was that I basically got my way by overcoming opposition. This is very true. I like to get immediate results, take on challenges, use authority, and solve problems. I like power, prestige, answers, and freedom among many other things. It also revealed that I am a very influential person. I have the ability to make contacts, I make a good impression when I want to, I can be articulate, motivate, and entertain. The results of this were so accurate, I could not wait to learn how to take my dominant and influential traits and become more steady and conscientious. Encompassing all four is my goal, and is ideal. It helped me also realize my strengths as well as my weaknesses. There is nothing wrong with how I lead, but there are certain times, places, and situations when a leader must adjust their style, and this exercise taught me that and also how to go about doing so.

The other thing that really stuck with me was our mediation sessions. We learned how to settle conflict in ways I had never thought about before. It was presented by Ron Hustedde. It was focused on public conflict resolution, but all of it could be applied to many everyday situations with friends, family, teachers, etc. It was entitled "Turning Lemons into Lemonade." We learned just exactly conflict is, its positive and negative aspects, how and why to take in opposite interests, how to

listen to both sides, and how to negotiate. This was so useful for me because as I said you can use it in everyday life. I find myself often taking a step back now and really listening to other people, seeing where they're coming from, and trying to come up with a sensible solution. 'During this particular session I also learned a lot about myself, particularly what kind of mode I enter when conflict arises. Not surprising, I was competitive, and somewhat compromising. I was not very collaborating, avoiding, or accommodating. I am good at making quick decisions and taking action when necessary, I am not afraid to tackle important issues where the best way may not be popular. I can argue or use other methods to win because I feel I am right. Like the DISC evaluation, this approach is not always a good one. I learned other ways to go about conflict and be able to encompass all of the resolution tactics to come to a fair solution.

Another speaker who came and I found more educational than anything else was Randy Weckman. He spoke about communication and how to use media to your advantage. I have always been interested in journalism so this was very interesting. I also did not know much about how to reach people and get them to work with you. I learned all about bureaucratic sources and what makes a good one, how to use mass media to one's advantage, and most importantly how to expose others to your message and get their attention.

One particular class that really stands out in my mind was on the issue of diversity lead by Mimi Haley and Winn Stevens. My individual project focused on the diversity problem I believe we have here at the University of Kentucky so I found it very interesting. We hung papers up on the walls with heading on them

of various groups of people who often have stereotypes attached to them.

Everyone in the class got the opportunity to write something under each group that they had heard about them. I come from a big city and the population is very diverse and people are very accepting for the most part, so I did not think the stereotypes themselves were all that big of a deal. Most of the student in the class, coming from smaller towns around Kentucky were really taken back. I, on the other hand, was surprised by my classmate's reactions. I did not know that people were so sheltered and almost ignorant to other races, ethnicities, religions, and so on. This really helped me to grow. I saw that people needed to be educated about these things and that it starts with us, the people, namely the students. This was a huge factor in my personal development and the development of my project.

As for my individual project and what I did, I will not go into that. However, there were some classes that really helped me along the way. First of all, I knew I had to have a vision. ELI helped me see that vision. Then, you must have an action plan and stick to it as best as possible. This does not necessarily mean a timeline you must strictly follow, but it must include what you want done and how you plan to get it done in a realistic, timely manner. Which comes to the next thing I came to learn a whole lot about, time management. We were told some things about time management, but you must go through this class to really learn what it all means. Between schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and whatever else you have going on, it is very difficult to manage your time in college and do it well. Especially when you are a first semester freshman at a state university. I learned

how to do it though and I sure am glad because I will use that along with almost everything else I learned in ELI for my next three years here and most likely the rest of my life.

And finally, last but certainly not least, I would like to show some love for the Emerging Leader Institute and all those who made my experience possible.

Applying for ELI was by far the greatest decision I made since deciding to come to UK. Our course coordinators were amazing. Rhonda was always there to listen and she truly cares about each and every one of us. Rachel was awesome, so organized, always on task, and friendly. My mentor group was the best.

Melinda was like a mother to me throughout the whole semester and really just wanted us all to do well. Joe, my peer mentor, was fun and level headed, never uptight and just allowing us to be ourselves. Everyone in ELI was amazing. I came here hardly knowing a soul, and now I have over twenty great friends who I know I can count on and will be leaders with me in the future.