

The Emerging Leadership Institute has been a wonderful experience for me as a person and a leader. I will describe in the following paragraphs a few activities that have made my experience in ELI one of enjoyable times. The events that I will be discussing are the chip trading game that we played during the diversity class, writing down the stereotypes of different groups of people, and my mentor group.

Dividing into groups and drawing out colored poker chips out of a bag seemed like innocent fun when the class began playing the game. However, as trading of the chips commenced and power was given to the people collecting the most points in two rounds of trading. With the power given to the top point holders, the instructors told them to make rules for the final round of the game with suggestions for the other two groups. Many rules were made, yet unfair to the other groups involved in the activity. The secluded groups plotted against the rule makers. This activity showed how power affects how people act because by the third round the group was composed of people from all the groups formed at the beginning of class. Doing this activity helped show me the affects of diversity between social classes. Many people were content with the group that they were placed in. I realized how people feel when no matter how hard they try to move up in life nothing changes. Realizing this and a fact revealed in community assets, finding out what the people in a social group need not what I feel they need, have allowed my vision of the community and its needs to be widened from the smaller view I had before our class began.

Another aspect of the diversity class that had an amazing impact on my life was writing things we thought or knew people believe about the variety groups that exist in our society. We anonymously wrote down the traits of those groups. After everyone was finished, the group as a whole examined the lists we as a class compiled about the different social groups. Some of the comments evoked emotions out of the group, but it was because of total misconceptions based on people's experience of a few members of a particular group. I learned a lot about the groups from members of our class involved in those groups through the emotions evoked. When I looked at the groups that I was related to, I did not really have emotions about what I saw. Many things that I say on those lists I had heard several times. I have looked at the variety of groups that I interact with on a daily basis since that class. I personally checked the stereotypes formed about these groups and learned not to generalize one person's qualities to the entire group.

The most important aspect of the class that has helped me develop as a leader is the Yellow mentor group. I was the only male in the group, but it was "all good." From the first day our group met, our bonds began to form. We supported each other as our individual projects began to take shape. We offered each other feedback and improvements on the projects. Our ideas differed from how we went about the subject of our project to our personal beliefs and values. However, as the semester came to a close and our group project grew nearer, the small group bonded to help the class become more organized, but not without humiliation of a fellow group member because she stepped up to be the leader and no one else offered to help in the planning. Personally, I felt bad that I had not tried harder and offered to help make sure everything was being completed. Our mentor group bonded to support our fellow member in her humiliation and support her. The rest of this is history and our project was a success. I learned that no matter how uncomfortable I am with talking to people there is always a little something that I

Kris Kendrick
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can do to make sure everything is moving smoothly. I understand that the problem is not doing anything, but thinking someone else is handling what really needs to be completed.

These activities resemble the greatest affect on my current lifestyle and continue to mold me day to day. Many of the other activities involved in this class remain working in me as well, such as learning to address problems before they arise. I know that everything taught in this class will make my leadership skills more defined and make me a better leader for knowing these values of leadership.