

Emerging Leader Institute Final Summary Paper  
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April 19, 2004

My participation this semester in the Emerging Leader Institute class has been very memorable and beneficial. I learned a lot about myself, the qualities of effective leaders, and organizing projects using leadership skills. These lessons and skills are very practical, as many of the ideas presented in the class I can apply to different groups in which I hold a leadership role as well could possibly be applied in my future career.

The presentation in which the ELI class examined their own leadership tendencies through a test stood out especially to me. I found it interesting (though not surprising) that so many people in a leadership class had strongly dominant personalities. Also, I found my personal leadership styles, as shown by this leadership test very interesting and accurate.

I was somewhat confused about the results of my leadership style test after I took the test, but after really thinking about my own leadership tendencies and things that I have done and would do in various leadership situations I find that I agree more and more with my test's results. The aspect of my scores that confused me was in the fact that the "behavior expected by others" graph was almost entirely different from my "real self under pressure" graph. My test results showed that others expect me to be much more steady and reliable than dominant, influencing or cautious. On the other hand, my test results showed that under pressure I am much more dominant and cautious, while not very steady and not influencing at all.

As a member of UK's meats judging team and an officer in the Agricultural Education Society, I find myself often taking leadership roles. Thinking about my behavior in interacting with members of these two groups, my leadership test results seem even more accurate. In each of these two groups I am seen as "the responsible person." If my coach or advisor is choosing someone to trust with an important task or information to give to the rest of either group, I am often chosen for that purpose. When a team member or club member is confused about instructions or an activity, often these people come to me to find out what is going on, as people know I have a habit of writing down assignments and directions. When someone is needed to be somewhere on time or prepared for an extra event, I am sometimes asked to do this as well. In addition I am generally seen as someone who tries to get along with everyone unless there is some good reason to stand up to a person, and I have a reputation for not answering questions directly but rather asking questions so that people can form their own opinions. In this way, I am not seen as especially dominant or influential, which is reported in my test results.

However, under pressure I can act somewhat differently. When a lot is on the line, or plans must be made quickly I have a very different leadership style. When that stakes are higher and assignments must be delegated to other people in order to get the job done I can be much more dominant and, at the same time cautious. During an Ag Ed Society event in which 200 high school students came to UK to learn about different FFA competitions and an enormous thunderstorm wouldn't allow us to hold the events outdoors as planned, I was able to make phone calls to contacts that I had around the College of Ag and found a place to relocate the FFA members to. In preparing for a meats judging competition last week the boys on my team joked the whole week about how I get too careful the day of competition by doing things like checking my gear several times and going over various study materials just before competition. Well, in competition this weekend my being cautious under pressure saved each of them when all three of

the boys forgot their blue pens (which are needed for in important segment of competition) and I had extras for them.

Several of the presentations during the course of the ELI class were very informative. I especially appreciated the material presented in Lori Garkovich's presentation on asset-based community development, Lance Bruner's presentation about mindfulness, and Ron Hustedde's presentation about conflict mediation.

I've had the opportunity to use some points from Dr. Garkovich's presentation in the Ag Ed Society. The Ag Ed Society is in a time of transition right now, with two advisors retiring, and two new advisors coming in, as well as a very strong group of members graduating at the end of this semester with fewer underclassmen members. By thinking about and talking to advisors and other active members about what the strongest points of the club are at this point, we have come up with a plan to unofficially join the Ag Ed Society with the FFA Alumni Club as both clubs had many members in common, and share an advisor. By linking the two clubs, both clubs will gain a few members, and members will be able to organize and participate in more leadership and community service activities without the two clubs competing for members' time and leadership efforts.

I've used Lance Bruner's presentation to reconsider my attitude about competition and competing. All through high school I competed in agricultural, speaking, and music events almost non-stop and didn't have a chance to spend much time doing anything else. After listening to Lance's presentation about living in the moment and observing life as it happens I reconsidered my attitude about competing. Now I have the chance to compete again in UK's meat judging team, but I'm having a lot more fun than I did when I competed in high school because I've been not taking the practices and competitions quite so seriously, and I've been keeping the importance of these competitions in perspective, so they don't take up all my time and energy.

Ron Hustedde's presentation was very interesting and truly made me think about the entire manner in which I considered conflict. Before hearing his presentation I saw most conflicts in a yes-or-not, this-or-this way. By looking at things from a different perspective, by looking at the motives and needs of each party involved, many more solutions become plausible and more people can be accommodated in any given situation. I haven't had an opportunity to use this particular skill just yet, but I've wondered several times in hearing others talk about conflicts they've been involved in, if this alternative method of problem solving would have been beneficial in their situation.

Finally, through the two leadership projects, the individual project and the group project, I've had the chance to learn more organizational, planning, communication, and goal-setting skills. As a result of the classes' improved skills, the group project was a hit, and many lives were touched. Personally, my individual project is off to a great start and I look forward to completing it at the beginning of the summer.

The Emerging Leader Institute was a very beneficial experience for me. I've learned a lot about my own leadership styles and how best to use my own natural tendencies to help lead effectively as well as what I need to work on as a leader. I've also picked up some new skills and ideas from the presentations. Finally, ELI has given me a chance to use my skills to help with a group project and to challenge me to complete an individual leadership project.