

## **ELI Final Paper**

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ELI Spring 2005

April 28, 2005

*“We lead from the essence of who we are as a person”* – Lillas Brown, University of Saskatchewan.

The quote above represents how I feel about leadership. Leadership is based off of who you are as a person, what makes you tick and what you're passionate about. These individual characteristics make you a leader. At the beginning of the semester we were to come up with a group definition of leadership. I feel like that was a good way to get everyone talking and working together, but that one definition meant something different to all 25 of us in that room. Being a leader is an individual characteristic and even people in Saskatchewan realize that.

Although leadership is personal and a characteristic one may possess, someone can also change his or her personality or characteristics to become a leader. There are not just a select few that are destined for greatness; others can join in as well. This is where this leadership class comes in. I feel like I may not have the exact characteristics to be a natural leader, but I can learn techniques to help me become a leader and I will put my own personal spin on the way I project what I have learned.

Coming in to this class I had no idea what to expect. I had heard many things about what I was going to do and how much fun I was going to have, but I had yet to

experience the fun and joy of this class, so I was a little apprehensive. What I expected to see when I walked into the room on the first day was many leaders, who were president of lots of organizations on campus, involved in many extra curricular activities, and just a bunch of over achievers. Well, I was very wrong. I walked in, and saw just ordinary people who were dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, and looked just about as scared as I was. Oddly enough, this eased my fears. I did not have to pretend to be something I was not or try to impress anyone. After that first day I felt at ease and knew this was going to be a fun class and hopefully grow in the process.

Throughout the semester I heard many speakers who presented on topics about leadership and what to do in certain leadership situations. These speakers all gave very good points and helpful tips. I feel like the most beneficial was the DISC assessment that each of us took. The DISC was presented by Rhonda Strouse who works in the Office of Student Activities. The DISC is a personal profile system to help you evaluate your leadership style and also give you ways to correct problems that your specific leadership style may encounter. Mrs. Strouse gave us a packet to go along with the DISC assessment to help us understand who we are as a leader better. This packet contained information on how to deal with others with a certain leadership style, and also how to incorporate other leadership styles into your own leading. This assessment helped me to pin point what I do in a leadership setting and also how to fix my problems that I may have. I am going to use this probably for the rest of my life to help navigate my actions in a leadership setting so I can cater to everyone's style of receptiveness.

As well as hearing speakers, as a class we were to plan a group service project. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise. We voted on a project to do as a class and

then were to create and operate this one day event. We voted to work with autistic children. We planned to do a one day camp with them to stimulate their thinking and motor activities, and also to help the parents get a rest from their hectic job as a parent. All through the semester we talked about this as a class but nothing really got done. There were a few class members who stepped up and took charge. They helped do a lot of preliminary work such as getting the facilities to host this event, and planning on what exactly was going to happen. Finally it became crunch time. I felt like we really stepped up to the plate and we pulled everything through just in time. This class, I feel, works better under pressure, which was good for me because I relate to that style. The project was a success and I think the class had more fun than the children who came to the event. We played with the kids, as well as talked to the parents. I feel that each of us learned something that day. I know I did.

The group project taught me many things about leading. It taught me that too many leaders can hurt and help you. We had trouble at the beginning trying to decide the plan of action for that day and what all was going to happen during the day. Too many people wanted to step up and carry out the arguing or discussing process. Also, crunch time is the best time to work. I feel like the closer it got to the day the more people were working together and getting things done. Another thing I learned was that sometimes you have to step back and let others speak. I did not have much of a role in this project, by means of deciding what was going to happen, but I choose not to. I stepped back and let others go forward because I was scared that too many opinions and too many leaders on one project may be more harmful than helpful. I feel like for this project we had just

the right amount of leaders to get the job done. This project opened my eyes to what people can do in high stress situations and how well people can work together.

Along with the group project, we had to plan an individual project. My individual project reflected the main passion I have in my life. I planned a Bible drive and I am sending the Bibles I collected with missionaries to china. I feel like this project has taught me many things about myself and I also noticed the characteristics that the DISC assessment reveled about me. The main thing that I got out of the individual project is that you have to have a passion for what you are doing. One thing that I question though is what if you are in a leadership situation where you don't have a passion for what you are doing? How do you deal with that? When Dr. Holbein spoke about being an effective leader vs. a successful leader, and I think it answered my question. Being a leader you have to be able to adapt to the situation. Being an effective leader means that you reach peoples hearts and build relationships with your followers. This is good sometimes, but in this type of leadership the task at hand isn't always completed. Being a successful leader means getting the job done and that's all. This is the type of leadership one may have in a project or situation where their passion is not fully in it. Finally, the combination of both of those is a good leader. This is the type of leader who gets the task done as well as building relationships with the followers. This is the leader that I strive to be, but that isn't always the case and sometimes you have to sacrifice to get the job done. As for my individual project, I feel like it taught me many things about myself as well as challenge myself. I had to work hard to come up with an idea and also implement that idea. I also had to learn to accept failure, which is one thing that I am not good at. Overall I feel

successful in completing the individual project, and I feel good about what I did to help the missionaries do their job better.

Now that this semester is coming to a close I am happy and sad. I am happy to have another year of college under my belt and also happy to not have to go to class anymore, but I am sad because I am finishing ELI and graduating to a true leader. I am also sad to leave ELI because I used my classmates and also Jared and Angel as support. They gave me confidence and reassurance that I could go out and do anything I wanted to. Every day after I got out of class I wanted to go and lead someone to do something great. I just hope that I do not lose that fire and that confidence to continue to try to go for the big opportunities and the leadership positions on campus and also in life. After I leave I plan on doing whatever life brings my way. So far I have been accepted to join the CAUSE and also be a UK FUSION team leader. One day I plan on coming back and being an ELI mentor to relive the past of being in ELI, and also to give advice and guidance to those who want to do some leadership on down the road. Even though it's over, I know that everyone in my class has had an impact on me because they are each so different and bring a different view of life to the forefront. It's the same way with leadership, each one has their own way of leading and they are the best at their own way.