

How My Leadership Skills Impacted My Experience In Brazil

The Life Leadership Conference was remarkable . The conference has made and is still making a great impact on my exchange in Brazil. I attended the Life Leadership Conference almost one month before arriving in Brazil. This was a great opportunity because I would need to use these new character traits and skills I adopted and learned from the Life Leadership Conference more than I ever had to before. To be in a foreign country and to be independent for the first time without the guidance and dependency of my biological parents encouraged me to utilize these new skills and character traits from the Life Leadership Conference. The Life Leadership Conference emphasized character traits and skills such as versatility, listening , Integrity, Honesty, enthusiasm, and articulation of speech. These character traits and skills have fortified and assisted me with fully enjoying and making the best of my experience in Brazil.

Versatility is the ability to cooperate and work with others well. I believe the more people a leader influences or comes in contact with the more he/she will need to utilize this important trait. This trait calls for an open mind and being flexible from a leader and creates "diverse thinking". Utilizing this skill sometimes means taking a step outside of your comfort zone. The advantages of being versatile is that a leader gains great opportunities to be exposed to a variety of new methods, and ideas. A common expression that relates to the benefits of versatility is "Two brains can out power one brain". This means that it is beneficial to accept and realize the ideas of others, rather than only depending on your own ideas. An open mind replaces ignorance with knowledge. While on exchange versatility has been a valuable skill for me, since I come in contact with many people who are much different than I and also think differently. For me to work in harmony with a variety of people it is necessary for me to recognize other points of views. An example of me using the skill of versatility, is simply building friendships in Brazil and working together with my classmates on school assignments. Another example was when my group and I for student council organized a party, we communicated together discussing and creating ideas of what our party would include. Without the trait of versatility and without excepting and understanding others points of view of how the party should've been organized, we would not have come to a compromise.

Articulation of speech is the organization of thoughts and the clarity by which one presents those thoughts orally. To be articulate benefits the ability to speak publicly. Though articulation was not addressed directly at the Life Leadership Conference it was addressed multiple times indirectly. To have a wide vocabulary helps with articulation. As a leader this is a necessary skill because most of the time followers will only support a leader if he seems vocal, and presentable. This skill has impacted my experience drastically, and I use this skill almost every day, it is essential. Since Portuguese is my second

language I often have to think extra before talking to make sure what I say makes sense. I use the skill of articulation when speaking Publicly , and when speaking informally to family and friends. Since I have been in Brazil I have spoken publically and have appeared twice on the local television channel, discussing my experience in Teresina. I have also utilized articulation while speaking before my peers as I ran for student council. In addition to speaking before rotarians regarding my exchange.

Enthusiasm is the self-motivating drive of the spirit. It often provides positive energy and can make leadership much easier. Enthusiasm influences the attitude, and the attitude usually depends on how much you enjoy an experience. A positive attitude driven by enthusiasm along with an optimistic outlook allows one to make the best of his/her scenario. An optimistic outlook and positive attitude are not only self benefiting but also beneficial to the people whom you come in contact with. These two characteristic traits uplift the spirit of others. Enthusiasm is definitely contagious. If one sees a leader that is of good with a positive attitude and enthusiasm, he will be more willing to treat the leader with respect. People are attracted to enthusiasm. An enthusiastic spirit uplifts others and is always searching for new methods or ways to advance. I've used enthusiasm in a variety of ways during exchange such as presenting myself as enthusiastic when meeting and greeting new people, building friendships and also by being optimistic and attempting to enjoy my exchange to the best of my ability.

The final and most important skill that I improved on and learned more about from the Life Leadership Conference is the ability to listen. This skill seems so simple but listening is a skill that is commonly most difficult. Listening is essential, and is the key to learning. Listening is observing others and processing their words into your brain and your heart, it requires cognitive thinking, and patience. I am constantly utilizing this skill. The advantages of listening are limitless. A few of the main advantages of listening includes learning from others mistakes to improve and enhancing your knowledge. For a leader, the skill of listening is critical. As an exchange student it is an obligation to listen, observe and always pay attention! Using the skill of listening has assisted me in learning the Portuguese language, and has helped me to understand the Brazilian culture and customs also listening has facilitated in the improvement of my academic skills.

The three-day long conference was a short period of time. However, the lectures given were of great quality and provided me the tools to enhanced my leadership skills. The experience at the Life Leadership Conference was unforgettable. The specified skills and characteristics along with some of the additional skills explained in the lectures at the conference will continue to impact my role of leadership in life. For the duration of the last 3 months of my exchange in Brazil I will continue to exercise skills I learned and continue to utilize these skills, to make my exchange remarkable!



The photo top left: The flag of my host state (Piauí) on the far left of the picture, to the right is the flag of Brazil, to the right of the flag of Brazil is the flag of Teresina (host city) and to the far right of the picture is the flag of rotary.

The photo top right: Student council and I.

The photo to the left in the middle: Friends and I from school.

The photo to the right in the middle: A cake of rotary celebrating the clubs anniversary.

The photo to the left at the bottom: Friends and I in Altos (A city neighboring Teresina).

The photo to the right at the bottom: My friend and I at school.