

Recognizing the Resources Within Ourselves

By Daisy Le

The leadership process is part of our daily experience. We may lead others, ourselves, or be led. We play our part in relationships and groups where it is always around. Sometimes there is an obvious leader while at other times, there isn't. Shared leadership is where everyone in the group takes responsibility for the process and the outcomes. It is a leadership model in which the specific leadership roles are carried out by the different members in the group at different times.

Within the coordinators group, I am hoping that we will be able to work in a situation where everyone can take on roles and responsibilities, tasks, or whatever else they want to do. Rather than being the forerunning force taking over, I am partaking in the practice of shared leadership by encouraging the other members in my group to take on certain roles and responsibilities. Leadership doesn't necessarily have to be about one person all the time. Like we learned in class, everyone has the qualities of being a leader where he/she can take on one form of responsibility in his/her life.

The pressure and stress that people in leadership positions face is enormous. Being that single person in charge of everything is not an easy task. Those in designated leadership roles and those who are followers need to let go of that expectation and embrace the immigrant workers' new way of leading. An example of a recent incident where I encouraged this shared leadership model was last week after class. While I took the initiative of turning in our first progress report, my suggestion was that each member take on the responsibility of turning in one thereafter. My

hopes for this is that every member of the coordinators group would be able to get the chance to lead by pulling the materials from all three of the other groups and bring in together in one progress report which ensures you, the professor, that as coordinators we are aware of the progress for the other groups and are on top of things.

For our committee work for the class project and for my work in this class as a whole, I feel that I am doing a good job when it comes to contributing to “shared leadership.” I still have a lot to learn about and from it, but I think I am doing all right with it at this time in my life. From the past four weeks, I’ve learned a lot about the members in my group. I am glad that I decided to become a coordinator. The reason being because it a smaller group compared to the other three which I absolutely love. Being in a small group gives you the advantage of getting to know each member in it a lot better. Although I may not completely remember which new leadership skill each member wants to develop over the next few weeks, I have the general idea of where they want to go with the leadership abilities they have thus far.

There are members in our group that enjoy riding in the back seat, and then there are those in our group that absolutely love steering the wheel. There is nothing completely wrong with neither one, but because our class is centered on the “shared leadership” model, we are definitely working on the sharing part. As of right now, our shared leadership abilities are not all equal. We know this and we are working on it. For the members that enjoys riding in the back seat, what I’ve tried to do is to encourage them to go to their respective groups (one of the other three committees) and to present the information they retrieve back to the rest of us coordinators. For the members in our group that loves to steer the wheel (myself included), we are taking a step

back and allowing out other members to take the initiative to do their share of the work (with our help of course). I definitely think this is one way in which my group has helped me develop my new skill — to be able to take the lead occasionally and to speak up in front of not only them, but to the members of the other groups as well. For this, I am very grateful for my group and for the opportunities they've given me.

In return, as members that know we find ourselves steering the wheel often, we try to motivate the other members in our group to work on developing their new leadership skill. We encourage every member in our coordinators group to lead one of our mini meetings — to direct our conversation in whichever path he/she chooses to take. We encourage every member to speak their minds and to let us know of any ideas they have in regards to the three projects we are trying to put on. And more importantly, as a group partaking in the shared leadership model, we encourage each other to step out of our respective comfort zones and to challenge one another to do beyond what that person think he/she is capable of doing. Leadership is all about encouragement — the ability to get people to realize their own resources, particularly what they've got within themselves. This is what I feel we are trying to work towards as the coordinators group of the Asian American 119 course.