Two years ago, I’d never heard of VEX Robotics. I joined my high school’s robotics club, which was in its inaugural year, because I hoped to gain knowledge related to my physics course. Many other students were similarly motivated, but we all underestimated how much we would benefit from VEX.

While it is true that every team member broadened their experiences with physics, programming, mathematics, and technology, we also profited in unexpected ways--we reached an understanding of balancing cooperation with independence and organization with spontaneity.

The first basic principle we learned was teamwork. Since most of us didn’t know each other, this was slightly difficult to attain. As we became more familiar with one another, we began to work as one group with different members assigned to different jobs. We realized the value of each member; no individual could reach the same achievements as the whole. At the time, we recognized that each person must assume some independence, not only in their work, but also in taking responsibility.

The organization of our robotics club underwent several major overhauls. We chose new officers, added adult mentors, devised new fundraising methods, and revised competition strategies. Despite the strong organization formed, my team was still able to face unexpected problems with ingenuity; for example, we ad-libbed a solution the morning before a major contest.

Naturally, VEX has taught me a great deal about the sciences, but it’s also left me more cognizant of the inner workings of a team.