Group Communication: Reflection Paper

To accomplish some purpose through working among a group can often be challenging because numerous members have to effectively agree and cooperate. I was recently privileged to have been part of a group that worked as a team and in doing so, was very successful. That particular group was comprised of roughly eight surfers making up the competitive San Diego Surf Team. In serving as a valued member on the prestigious team, I unconsciously experienced the stages within group development and different roles that were taken on.

Our team initially developed as we came together at the first surf team meeting, each with the interest of competing and representing our high school, which was the forming stage. The storming stage involved a trial that was held to determine the order of each surfer on the roster. Positions were disputed so we voted on a team captain. By the norming stage, roles for the surfers were distinguished, some similar and other's more important. While less significant norms were stated, the established group goal was to win the National Title which originated from shame of defeat the previous year. Our team was committed throughout the performing stage as we engaged in recurring team surf practices, intensive workouts, and strategizing until ultimately surpassing our goal by being recognized for 2 coveted national titles. Not only was the competition season completed, but most of us surf team members proceeded to graduate so it
was inevitable that we would adjourn. We won an all-inclusive surf trip for our performance which was a nice, elongated celebration during the adjourning stage.

We were a focused group with evenly distributed task roles. James, who was named captain of our surf team, was influential to us friends in the group, providing direction as the initiator. Brian was the information giver, always current with results and standings of opponents. J.R. was the clarifier-summarizer by frequently reflecting on which activities were most beneficial to our continued progress for developing our team. Coach Jeff represented himself as the procedural technician fulfilling his coaching duties of scheduling practices, orchestrating exercises, and providing all extra equipment to carry out developmental meetings. His maintenance role was the harmonizer, because he always emphasized how important teamwork was in order to succeed. Oliver was our energizer by always being enthusiastic, even in times we were losing which would always give us surfers a positive attitude. My group maintenance role was the encourager-supporter as I recognized fellow teammates’ performances by being very complimentary. Derrick had a very agreeable personality and was supportive serving as a follower. The tension releaser happened to be our most humorous friend, Jeremy, who would always take the edge off when we got too serious. His upbeat charisma rarely translated to the ineffective role of the clown, but he was sometimes a distraction. Of the entire team, there was one self-centered member, Chris, who along the way became a deserter and failed to attend our meetings without notice.

The surf team developed well as a group because of the effective group components we embraced. Synergy occurred as we all worked together with a great deal of cooperation between members on the team. Previously in individual competition throughout California, none of us
surfers were very dominant in our divisions. Many of the best surfers that were constantly winning came from San Clemente and Huntington Beach. However, by coming together and uniting as a team, we were able to beat the stronger surfers and their teams from up north, demonstrating the significance of our synergetic group work. We weren’t able to win individually but each of our contributions to the team was a greater combined effect allowing for us to ultimately achieve our goal of winning the championships.

The team met at practices several times a week that were very productive. These meetings went well, but could have gone better if we had a more structured schedule to maximize our time together. When considering the potential of our team, Coach Jeff told us members that we could win if we wanted it, causing us to positively react with confidence. Chris’ personality was stubborn so he decided that he was too cool and didn’t see any importance in being part of the team any longer. Initially group members struggled with his absences because we felt that we weren’t as strong without him. Eventually J.R. fulfilled his spot, and although he wasn’t as experienced as the surfer Austin was, he wanted it more so ended up being a powerful addition. We managed to succeed together because not one of us had the ego of wanting to be the best on the team but instead all wanted our team as a whole to be the best. We constantly had energetic group meetings, anticipating practice after practice until we got to perform everything we worked so hard at in the competition. I believe our surf team was so successful compared to all the group teams that we defeated because of our commitment to each other. We trained really hard and were so focused in working to accomplish our goal so to win was extremely satisfying.
I feel fortunate having had the opportunity to be a part of the San Diego Surf Team because it was a positive group experience. The team was strong from the beginning through the development stages without disagreement. Every member was reliable and had a group role important in progressing collectively. Our group thrived off of the synergy composed by coming together as a team. The team was a great example of a successful group.