Reflective Essay on Teamwork

Good teamwork plays a crucial role in implementing and fulfilling common goal quicker and better in a team project. Every team member plays his or her particular role and takes on different responsibilities which combined together can make the team function well and achieve common goal. In different stages of teamwork, conflicts or arguments may occur as members have different standpoints which need be harmonized within the team. The key to effective teamwork is to exploit each team role's unique abilities to motivate them play up strengths and avoid their weaknesses with a proper balance. Through teamwork, I clearly recognize my role characteristics, learn to develop my strong points and circumvent weaknesses in the team, and draw lessons and reflections on how to deal with emergencies happened in teamwork.

Every member in a team will have his or her role different from others. According to the Team Role Theory that Dr Meredit identified and developed, different individuals act different team roles to varying degrees which he grouped into nine general kinds (Belbin D.M., 2007). By identifying characteristics of different kind of roles, we can ensure to make the most of every member and manage weaknesses to avoid them.

There are four roles in my team. Student A is a shaper; Student B and student C are team-workers; Student D is an implementer; and I am a completer finisher. Completer finishers, just as its name implies, are painstaking, conscientious and used most effectively at the end of a task worked as quality controller, to search out errors and omissions, modify and polish them, and finally make sure the task delivers on time (Belbin D.M., 2007). But on the other side, completer finishers are inclined to worry unduly because of their perfectionism and have difficulty letting go and delegating work (West M, 1994).

My role is important to teamwork guaranteeing task finished as scheduled and improving team performance to high quality. As completer finishers are always perfectionists with conscientious and disciplined characteristics, I have the capacity for follow-through and attention to detail, to spot errors and gaps and modify them for better. I do not allow any delay in task completing and think highly of punctuality. Owning to my role characteristics, I always keep an eye on the team members' work process to recognize if task is undertaken as scheduled timetable and finished per our completion requirements. This works effectively and efficiently to make our team goal accomplished and standardized. But I also need admit that I am easily irritable and worried unduly, which might bring unnecessary air of tension to the team members and will affect their personal emotions and somewhat derail the work efficiency. For instance, when student A did not finish the scheduled task on time, I will think it was quite an irresponsible act and get quite fussed.

During the teamwork experience, I felt teamwork is not an easy job. In the evolve of team building, Tuckman's teamwork theory of Four Stages of Group Development can help me better understand and manage various problems or unexpected circumstances that might happen at different stages of team development (Miller DL, 2003). According to Tuchman, there are four

phrases in team evolve: forming, storming, norming and performing (Tuckman, online). During my experience from this teamwork, in the four different stages of group development, both positive and negative circumstances happened and need be taken care of.

The initial stage of team development is forming. In this stage, individuals are not united quite well yet and it will be difficult to reach agreement. Each member is eager to find their place and hardly can feel a sense of belonging within the team (Scott D. J., 2000). As members are nearly strangers, they do not know clearly about their purpose and strongly need a leader's guidance to tell them why they are together. To overcome the problems caused for the forming stage and prepare for the following team task, our team opened some meetings in the library to build trust within each other. But some unexpected thing happened in our first meeting. Student A did not show up when everybody else were waiting for his appearance. He was not in Preston and went outing at that time. He did not check email while the notice of meeting was spread within the team by email only as we usually use email for connection and not thought for the accident somebody might not check email sometimes. This was an unhappy accident and we learnt to recheck for some unconfirmed uncertainties to avoid such accidents happening again.

Through meetings, my leader illustrated the team task and general agenda and regulations for task completion. Tasks were divided and allotted to each person concerned. This stage is important as it paves the way to next team stages' smooth development. Each member's strengths and weaknesses need be identified and thus can make sure each one play up strength and be arranged to finish the most appropriate part. If we can allocate different tasks to the right person, efficiency of teamwork will be elevated greatly which will do better to individual motivation and avoid less conflicts or complaints within the team.

When the forming stage finished, individuals began to see themselves as part of the team and will sense a belonging and motivated to work together. The storming stage is coming as clash of views and collision of all sorts of train of thought slowly gather together which is enough to make a storm for both brains and teamwork (Tuckman, 1977). In this stage, team members can easily challenge each other due to individuals held different points of view towards the same thing. Using Tuchman's word to say, conflict and contradiction typify this stage as differences surface. Actually this happens many times in our team discussion. Each individual had different attitudes towards same question, and all would appreciate others to accept and think the way as has suggested. For example, when we were discussing in one of the meetings, student D expressed his opinions with his standpoints which student B and me thought good and gave support. But student A and student C had quite different ideas. Therefore conflict is unavoidable. If we vote to decide which idea will be adopted, student A and student C will feel unsatisfied and reduce teamwork initiative. I figured out that student A and student C's standpoints had some plus points if melted into student D's ideas, so I tried to convince both sides to modify their ideas and harmonize a generally accepted scheme.

For many times we felt the storming stage was wasting lots of time for endless arguing and loss of focus on the completion of common task. But through our efforts to "polish" each other based

on mutual respects, we finally learnt the further meaning of teamwork and realized in a team the collective interests and team performance is above all. This is a stage for team members to harmonize their ideas and team leader played important role to coordinate and help for decision making to the method of how to get the task done. Besides, each team member should not only learn independent thinking, but also to appreciate and respect other's ideas and opinions, thus to figure out some balance within the team and finish the team goal in a peaceful and beneficial way.

When experiencing a smooth transition of the storming stage, the stage of norming seems to be overcome more naturally and easily. The norming stage is a stage where team members start to trust more on each other and unite together to process the task with more teamwork with a growing sense of "togetherness" (Gersick, 1988). With the forming and storming stages' development, our team gradually grew more mature and teamwork was achieved more effectively and efficiently. Team members now would follow team principles and behave for the best of the team.

The stage of performing is the final stage which focused on task refreshing, implementing and completing. All teamwork combined to provide synergy for performance is delivered through people working effectively together (Tuckman, online). In this stage our team had many modifications towards task structure and manifestation. Thus team members can be allotted for new tasks or complete for other's tasks as well. We had an accident in this stage which was finally settled imminent but no threatening to final team performance. Task of conclusion was assigned to complete by Student A which I emphasized many times in our discussion. He did not spell any disagreement before but didn't finish for this part until the deadline for task completion. Despite his irresponsibility, I also made a mistake that silence did not mean agreement. But it was urgent and no time to look into who was to be blamed, finally team leader took on the responsibility to finish this part by himself.

Despite this little accident, process executions of our teamwork were quite smooth and efficient. Team members finished their tasks as scheduled and we worked together to point out each other's mistakes and improve team performance in final presentation.

Through the four stages of group development, I learnt that good communications and discipline are very important to make a team work more efficient and unity together more tightly. Besides, mutual respects, trusts and understanding are essential to achieve common goal. When people learn to appreciated and support each other's efforts, individual is highly motivated and inspired to improve work efficiency. That is the charm of teamwork which I enjoy for the most.

From this teamwork experience, I strongly feel the importance of teamwork and the amazement it may bring for quality task completion and goal achievement. It teaches me to coordinate with others and as an individual to put group interest in the first place. Maximizing individual strengths and minimizing weaknesses to achieve a team's common goal and harmonizing team members'

standpoints to some balance is the charm only teamwork can bring and make each individual have better play.

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