Ravi UC Essay Draft

**Prompt #1**

***Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.***

Radiation intensity, module temperature and orientation, as well as tilt angle: these are the key factors affecting solar panels’ performance. Indeed, these seem like the most perfect cherry picks. However, it did not display the chaotic labor that my school research project teammates had to go through thanks to our initial lack of communication.

Too hardheaded and fixated on our own wants for the project topic, we subconsciously mounted up each other’s ideas into an impasse. We were like three wild dogs trying to claim their territories in the same spot, only to find out that the spot’s not even that great.

“The Art of People” and “How Habits Work”. Two books that taught me the importance of effective communication: knowing when to listen, interrupt, and lead group discussions. I realized that I was too busy focusing on the third step, skipping the first two. With a scrumptious steak dinner accompanying the meeting, I gathered my teammates to bring it back to square one.

Yet it did not go smoothly from there either. The way our discussion proceeded was full of uncertainty. We would respond to a question by another question, ultimately creating this air of confusion with no light at the end of the tunnel. Having already listened, I went on to the second step which was to interrupt. I devised a rule: to only answer questions with statements. Forcing us to take a step back and put on our thinking caps before responding, that meeting finally gave birth to the solar panel topic.

The third and final step? To lead with delegative capabilities. Instead of trying to create our own “umbrellas,” we mutually agreed upon one and ration equally critical parts of the groupwork to everyone. That is, each person gets to “lead” their own subtopics based on our differing know-hows and interests, slowly but surely building the synergy of our teamwork as the clear division of labor and timeline instilled confidence to finish our project on time.

With that, I learned how a true leader is to listen and not command, give and not receive.