Apollo 13
Reflection Questions

1. Would you define the Apollo 13 astronauts and their support ground crew as a working group or as a team (according to differentiation in text)? What specific reasons/scenes in the movie support your answer?

Obviously a working team. The NASSA team worked collectively together and individually to solve the CO2 built up problem in the cabin, when the air filtration system failed. It was interesting to see each individual take a part separately and collectively. One group in Houston went through the simulated cabin and gathered all the items they could find no matter what the use of the item and a different group put the items out on a table for all the engineers to design a filtration system. That filter was then taken to mission control where they directed verbally the instruction to reconstruct a make shift filter to Col Fred Haise and Col. Jack Swigert for a successful conclusion. As each team worked separately they had a very specific purpose to complete. Each person in the group did not take over as leader but shared in the leadership roles.

2. Using concepts about emergent leadership, who functioned as leader(s) in the movie? How was that leadership communicated? How did it emerge?

Flight Director Gene Kranz displayed through his character; Idiosyncratic Credits in emergent leadership. Before Apollo 13 blasted off, it showed a package being delivered to Kranz, inside was a cream colored sweeter vest. It was insinuated in the movie that that vest was his lucky vest that he only wore during Apollo flights. My opinion is that Kranz came across extremely experienced from his past history. Because of his credits acquired from the past he was given full autonomy from leaders watching over him. Kranz proved his worth and gained even more creditability as he showed his true leadership when mission control heard the fateful words “Houston we’ve got a problem.” It was from that point of a doomed mission until splash down that he displayed and showed full emergent leadership.

3. What organizational assumptions, values, and symbols were displayed in the movie? How were assumptions and values communicated? What did the material & non-material artifacts communicate about the organization & leadership?

I once again am going to reference to the mission Director Kranz and his cream colored vest regarding material artifacts, that was delivered to him in a fancy box with paper lining. When he opened the box and put it on you could tell that the vest had symbolic meaning to him, for him it was also a ritual to go through.

NASAA had a ritual in which they allowed the families to gather one last time before the astronauts were quarantined, they all stood across a gravel road from each other and talked for a while and then said their good byes. In the movie Jim Lovell had his own little non-material symbolic gesture that he gave to his wife in a hand gesture indicating that he loved her and would be back. All this indicated that the mission was extremely high risk, when that’s the circumstances human-beings seem to turn towards a higher powers or beliefs, in this case beliefs. The vest established a belief in luck the symbolic gesture Lovell sent to his wife was in a way the last good byes with luck hoping to return. No matter the reason for everyone’s symbolic rituals it was evident that the mission, NASSA and all leaders involved that it was never cut and dry, that there was always risk when you put three men on top of a rocket all bets are off.
Experience was clearly the communicative concept used throughout the entire movie. And when the Apollo had problems Director Kranz gave off a persona of expectancy, all eyes were upon him, everyone obeyed his commands, everyone respect his final decision and followed through with it when he gave the order all this was gained from an emergent leader some where along his work experience. Intelligence was displayed when positive expectation were given to solve problems, Kranz said numerous times “Failure is NOT an option” one particular time was when they had to figure out how much Power the module would need to get back to earth, with what they had it would sling shot around the moon and make it back about \( \frac{3}{4} \) of the way. That was not acceptable to Kranz and he communicated it in a very strong and positive manner, intellectually this affects everyone in association to the problem, it causes them to think cognitively that if there is no option to fail we must figure out how to actually make it work to succeed. I enjoyed when Kranz demonstrated Experimentation, it was actually the discovery of the Power problem when a young man stood up and said right to Kranz that there will not be enough power to get the astronauts back alive, there were those engineers around him that disagreed. Kranz and the engineer had a slight stare down and then as if he recognized the employee’s skills, he accepted it and began the solution process. Experiment or creativity seemed to be the success tool used during the entire disaster. Kranz never displayed fear, he was always positive and stubborn in not conceding to failure. I believe as he displayed the aforementioned traits he was given the same in respect from his employees, Kranz’s subordinates were always listened to with respect and praised for a successful accomplishment. In whatever their task was. This confidence seemed to stimulate the team to be more creative and think during the experiment how to make it work.