

Arizona State University (ASU) COM230 Small Group Communication Final Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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Questions

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1. When is it most advantageous to use complex media?
 - A. When the message is straightforward
 - B. When the message is ambiguous and needs explanation
 - C. When the audience is large
 - D. When the message has no emotional impact
2. Which of the following is an example of 'richer media'?
 - A. Text messages
 - B. Phone calls
 - C. Face-to-face meetings
 - D. Bulletin boards
3. Which myth about conflict might prevent open communication?
 - A. Conflict is normal and can lead to improvement
 - B. Conflict is harmful and should be avoided
 - C. Conflict is often beneficial for group cohesion
 - D. Conflict helps clarify misunderstandings
4. In individualistic societies, how are reliance and dependency typically viewed?
 - A. As a demonstration of community support
 - B. As a necessary social behavior
 - C. As shameful and undesirable
 - D. As a sign of teamwork
5. Collectivistic cultures are more likely to emphasize which of the following values?
 - A. Personal achievement
 - B. Self-reliance
 - C. Cooperation and support
 - D. Individual rights

6. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of primary groups?
- A. Members share close personal relationships
 - B. They are often larger in size
 - C. Relationships are typically enduring
 - D. Emotional support is often exchanged among members
7. What does entropy refer to in the context of system concepts?
- A. A process in which order deteriorates with the passage of time
 - B. A systematic method of organization
 - C. A way to improve communication
 - D. A technique for enhancing creativity
8. In the emergence of a leader, which members are likely to stay?
- A. Those who prioritize task-oriented goals only.
 - B. Members blending task and social aspects.
 - C. Those who avoid conflict at all costs.
 - D. Members who do not participate in discussions.
9. Which term describes the tendency of cohesive groups to avoid thorough analysis?
- A. Conflict resolution
 - B. Groupthink
 - C. Negotiation
 - D. Decision fatigue
10. What outcome is associated with the Compromising conflict management style?
- A. Win-lose solutions
 - B. Win-win approaches
 - C. Equal distribution of resources
 - D. High conflict resolution

Answers

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1. B
2. C
3. B
4. C
5. C
6. B
7. A
8. B
9. B
10. B

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Explanations

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1. When is it most advantageous to use complex media?

- A. When the message is straightforward
- B. When the message is ambiguous and needs explanation
- C. When the audience is large
- D. When the message has no emotional impact

Using complex media is most advantageous when the message is ambiguous and requires explanation because complex media, such as videos, infographics, or interactive platforms, provide multiple layers of information that can clarify intricate ideas or concepts that may not be easily understood through simple communication. This type of media allows for a more engaging and detailed exploration of the content, utilizing visual elements, sound, and interactive features to enhance the audience's comprehension. When a message lacks clarity, complex media can present nuances, contextual information, and supplementary details that help to unpack the ambiguity. This is particularly useful in small group communication, where members may have varying levels of understanding or background knowledge about the topic at hand. By employing complex media, facilitators can bridge gaps in understanding and facilitate more productive discussions among group members, leading to more informed decision-making and deeper engagement with the content.

2. Which of the following is an example of 'richer media'?

- A. Text messages
- B. Phone calls
- C. Face-to-face meetings
- D. Bulletin boards

Richer media refers to communication channels that provide a higher level of sensory engagement and information richness. Face-to-face meetings are considered richer media because they allow for the incorporation of verbal and non-verbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. This multi-faceted interaction fosters a deeper understanding and connection between participants, enhancing the overall communication experience. In contrast, other communication forms such as text messages, while convenient, lack the immediacy and depth of interaction found in face-to-face conversations. Phone calls do provide some level of richness through vocal intonation and immediate feedback, but they do not convey visual cues like facial expressions or gestures. Bulletin boards, on the other hand, are more static and visual, delivering information without the interpersonal engagement that characterizes richer media. Therefore, the most engaging and comprehensive form of communication among the options provided is definitely face-to-face meetings.

3. Which myth about conflict might prevent open communication?

- A. Conflict is normal and can lead to improvement
- B. Conflict is harmful and should be avoided
- C. Conflict is often beneficial for group cohesion
- D. Conflict helps clarify misunderstandings

The belief that conflict is harmful and should be avoided can significantly hinder open communication among group members. This myth perpetuates the idea that engaging in conflict is ultimately negative, leading individuals to sidestep discussions that may involve differing opinions or perspectives. Consequently, when people avoid conflict due to this mindset, they miss out on opportunities for constructive dialogue, which is essential for problem-solving and innovation in group settings. Avoiding conflict can also result in unresolved issues that fester beneath the surface, ultimately impairing relationships and group dynamics. In contrast, recognizing that conflict can be a normal part of group interactions encourages members to address disagreements openly, fostering a culture of trust and collaboration, and paving the way for improved outcomes. Understanding that constructive conflict can be productive is vital for effective small group communication, making the belief that conflict should be avoided particularly detrimental to group success.

4. In individualistic societies, how are reliance and dependency typically viewed?

- A. As a demonstration of community support
- B. As a necessary social behavior
- C. As shameful and undesirable
- D. As a sign of teamwork

In individualistic societies, reliance and dependency are often viewed as shameful and undesirable because these cultures prioritize independence and self-sufficiency. The core values in individualistic societies emphasize personal achievement and autonomy, leading to the belief that relying on others for help is a sign of weakness or a lack of capability. Individuals are encouraged to be self-reliant and to solve their own problems without seeking assistance from others. This cultural perspective can create a stigma around dependency, as it contrasts with the broader societal goals of individuality and personal success. As such, those who exhibit dependence may be perceived negatively, reinforcing the notion that strong individuals should not show vulnerability or seek support from their peers or community. In contrast, collectivist societies, which value group cohesion and interdependence, tend to view reliance on others as a positive trait that enhances community bonds and support systems.

5. Collectivistic cultures are more likely to emphasize which of the following values?

- A. Personal achievement
- B. Self-reliance
- C. Cooperation and support
- D. Individual rights

Collectivistic cultures place a strong emphasis on the group over the individual. In these cultures, values such as cooperation and support are prioritized to ensure the well-being and harmony of the community or family unit. Individuals are encouraged to work together, share resources, and uphold mutual responsibility, which fosters a sense of belonging and interdependence among group members. This focus on collective success often means that personal achievements or individual rights are secondary to the interests of the group. In collectivistic societies, people typically strive to maintain harmonious relationships, minimize conflict, and support one another, which reinforces the importance of cooperation and mutual assistance. By prioritizing these values, collectivistic cultures promote a sense of community and solidarity that is central to their social structure.

6. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of primary groups?

- A. Members share close personal relationships
- B. They are often larger in size
- C. Relationships are typically enduring
- D. Emotional support is often exchanged among members

The correct answer is that primary groups are generally not characterized by being larger in size. Primary groups typically consist of a small number of individuals who share close personal relationships, and these groups are known for their intimacy and emotional connectivity. Members of primary groups, such as family and close friends, often engage in enduring relationships, offering consistent emotional support and interacting in a meaningful way. When we consider the nature of primary groups, size plays a crucial role. These groups thrive on personal connections and shared experiences, which are more feasibly maintained in smaller settings. Larger groups tend to lack the intimacy and personal interaction that define primary groups, thus reinforcing the notion that primary groups are usually smaller in size.

7. What does entropy refer to in the context of system concepts?

- A. A process in which order deteriorates with the passage of time
- B. A systematic method of organization
- C. A way to improve communication
- D. A technique for enhancing creativity

In the context of system concepts, entropy refers to the tendency of systems to move from a state of order to a state of disorder over time. This concept is particularly relevant in small group communication, as it illustrates how groups can experience increasing chaos and fragmentation if not properly managed. Over time, without intervention or structure, communication within a group can become less effective and more disorganized, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. The concept emphasizes the importance of maintaining organization and clarity within a group to counteract this natural drift toward disorder. Understanding entropy helps group members recognize the need for regular communication, structured processes, and defined roles to sustain effective group dynamics. It highlights that managing a group's communication and operations is vital for achieving desired outcomes and maintaining cohesion over time.

8. In the emergence of a leader, which members are likely to stay?

- A. Those who prioritize task-oriented goals only.
- B. Members blending task and social aspects.
- C. Those who avoid conflict at all costs.
- D. Members who do not participate in discussions.

The chosen answer emphasizes the importance of balancing both task-oriented and social aspects in small group dynamics. Members who blend these aspects are more likely to stay engaged and committed to the group as they contribute to achieving the group's goals while also fostering a positive social environment. This dual focus encourages collaboration and strengthens relationships among members, making it easier to navigate challenges and promote group cohesion. By fostering a supportive atmosphere while also addressing the tasks at hand, these members can help motivate others and contribute to sustained group participation, which is crucial in the emergence and effectiveness of a leader. This combination creates an environment where members feel valued, heard, and invested in the group's success. In contrast, members who focus solely on task-oriented goals may overlook the importance of interpersonal relationships, leading to potential disengagement if conflicts arise or if they feel unsupported. Those who avoid conflict might struggle to address issues necessary for growth and can create tension within the group. Finally, members who do not participate in discussions are unlikely to have a strong connection to the group's goals or dynamics, making them less likely to engage actively in the group's processes. Therefore, the blending of task and social considerations is essential for maintaining group stability and member retention.

9. Which term describes the tendency of cohesive groups to avoid thorough analysis?

A. Conflict resolution

B. Groupthink

C. Negotiation

D. Decision fatigue

The term that describes the tendency of cohesive groups to avoid thorough analysis is groupthink. This concept refers to a psychological phenomenon that occurs within groups when the desire for harmony or conformity results in irrational or dysfunctional decision-making. Members of a cohesive group may suppress dissenting viewpoints, fail to critically analyze alternatives, or prioritize consensus over the quality of decisions. This often leads to a situation where potential issues or better options are overlooked because the group is overly focused on maintaining unity and agreement. Groupthink typically emerges in cohesive teams that are insulated from outside opinions and pressure, causing a detrimental lack of critical thinking. It is important for groups to recognize this tendency and actively encourage diverse opinions and critical debate to avoid the pitfalls of groupthink.

10. What outcome is associated with the Compromising conflict management style?

A. Win-lose solutions

B. Win-win approaches

C. Equal distribution of resources

D. High conflict resolution

The Compromising conflict management style is characterized by finding a middle ground where both parties in a conflict make concessions to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. This style usually leads to a win-win outcome because both sides feel that they have gained something from the negotiation, even if it's not everything they initially wanted. In a compromising situation, each participant gives up part of their demands to achieve a common goal or resolution. This approach fosters collaboration and cooperation, as it encourages understanding and the acknowledgement of each other's needs. The other options do not accurately reflect the nature of the Compromising style. Win-lose solutions indicate a situation where one party benefits at the expense of the other, which contradicts the essence of compromise. Equal distribution of resources implies a fair split without acknowledging the underlying interests of both parties. Finally, high conflict resolution suggests an intense struggle and a resolution process that may not align with the collaborative nature of compromise, where the goal is to ease the conflict rather than escalate it.