

THE UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
MAIN EXAMINATION 2009/2010

TITLE OF PAPER: ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
COURSE CODE: ACS1 (M)
TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: **WRITE THE NAME OF YOUR FACULTY ON THE
ANSWER SCRIPT**
ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

TOTAL MARKS: 100

This examination paper contains 9 pages including the cover sheet.

**DO NOT OPEN UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE
INVIGILATOR**

QUESTION 1: Essay (30 marks)

Write at least a page, but not more than two pages, on ONE of the following topics.

1. Write an essay describing differences between your parents' views on socially appropriate behaviour and your own views.

2. On several occasions, local newspapers have reported on violence in schools. Write an essay presenting your views on the causes of such violence and suggest how it can be avoided.

3. We are overwhelmingly dependent on computers, but is this dependence a good thing? Write an essay arguing for or against dependence on computers.

4. There is currently a proposal to curtail tertiary scholarships, partly because of the poor repayment rate on the loan portions of such scholarships and partly because some argue the money should be allocated toward funding Free Primary Education. Write an essay explaining your views on this proposal and responding to the arguments given.

5. "Traditional and scientific medicine are enemies." Do you agree?

QUESTION 2: Comprehension (30 marks)

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Afloat in the Ocean, Expanding Islands of Trash

By LINDSEY HOSHAU

1. ABOARD THE ALGUITA, 1,000 miles northeast of Hawaii — In this remote patch of the Pacific Ocean, hundreds of miles from any national boundary, the detritus of human life is collecting in a swirling current so large that it defies precise measurement.
2. Light bulbs, bottle caps, toothbrushes, Popsicle sticks and tiny pieces of plastic, each the size of a grain of rice, inhabit the Pacific garbage patch, an area of widely dispersed trash that doubles in size every decade and is now believed to be roughly twice the size of Texas. But one research organization estimates that the garbage now actually pervades the Pacific, though most of it is caught in what oceanographers call a gyre like this one — an area of heavy currents and slack winds that keep the trash swirling in a giant whirlpool.
3. Scientists say the garbage patch is just one of five that may be caught in giant gyres scattered around the world's oceans. Abandoned fishing gear like buoys, fishing line and nets account for some of the waste, but other items come from land after washing into storm drains and out to sea.
4. Plastic is the most common refuse in the patch because it is lightweight, durable and an omnipresent, disposable product in both advanced and developing societies. It can float along for hundreds of miles before being caught in a gyre and then, over time, breaking down.
5. But once it does split into pieces, the fragments look like confetti in the water. Millions, billions, trillions and more of these particles are floating in the world's trash-filled gyres.
6. PCBs, DDT and other toxic chemicals cannot dissolve in water, but the plastic absorbs them like a sponge. Fish that feed on plankton ingest the tiny plastic particles. Scientists from the Algalita Marine Research Foundation say that fish tissues contain some of the same chemicals as the plastic. The scientists speculate that toxic chemicals are leaching into fish tissue from the plastic they eat.
7. The researchers say that when a predator — a larger fish or a person — eats the fish that eats the plastic, that predator may be transferring toxins to its own tissues, and in greater concentrations since toxins from multiple food sources can accumulate in the body.
8. Charles Moore found the Pacific garbage patch by accident 12 years ago, when he came upon it on his way back from a sailing race in Hawaii. As captain, Mr. Moore ferried three researchers, his first mate and a journalist here this summer in his 10th

scientific trip to the site. He is convinced that several similar garbage patches remain to be discovered. "Anywhere you really look for it, you're going to see it," he said.

9. Many scientists believe there is a garbage patch off the coast of Japan and another in the Sargasso Sea, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Bonnie Monteleone, a University of North Carolina, Wilmington, graduate student researching a master's thesis on plastic accumulation in the ocean, visited the Sargasso Sea in late spring and the Pacific garbage patch with Mr. Moore this summer. "I saw much higher concentrations of trash in the Pacific garbage patch than in the Sargasso," Ms. Monteleone said, while acknowledging that she might not have found the Atlantic gyre.

10. Ms. Monteleone, a volunteer crew member on Mr. Moore's ship, kept hoping she would see at least one sample taken from the Pacific garbage patch without any trash in it. "Just one area — just one," she said. "That's all I wanted to see. But everywhere had plastic."

11. The Pacific garbage patch gained prominence after three independent marine research organizations visited it this summer. One of them, Project Kaisei, based in San Francisco, is trying to devise ways to clean up the patch by turning plastic into diesel fuel.

12. Environmentalists and celebrities are using the patch to promote their own causes. The actor Ted Danson's nonprofit group Oceana designated Mr. Moore a hero for his work on the patch. Another Hollywood figure, Edward Norton, narrated a public-service announcement about plastic bags, which make their way out to the patch.

13. Mr. Moore, however, is the first person to have pursued serious scientific research by sampling the garbage patch. In 1999, he dedicated the Algalita foundation to studying it. Now the foundation examines plastic debris and takes samples of polluted water off the California coast and across the Pacific Ocean. By dragging a fine mesh net behind his research vessel Algalita, a 50-foot aluminum catamaran, Mr. Moore is able to collect small plastic fragments.

14. Researchers measure the amount of plastic in each sample and calculate the weight of each fragment. They also test the tissues of any fish caught in the nets to measure for toxic chemicals. One rainbow runner from a previous voyage had 84 pieces of plastic in its stomach.

15. The research team has not tested the most recent catch for toxic chemicals, but the water samples show that the amount of plastic in the gyre and the larger Pacific is increasing. Water samples from February contained twice as much plastic as samples from a decade ago.

16. "This is not the garbage patch I knew in 1999," Mr. Moore said. "This is a totally different animal." For the captain's first mate, Jeffery Ernst, the patch was "just a reminder that there's nowhere that isn't affected by humanity."

Questions on the passage "Afloat on the Ocean, Expanding Islands of Trash"

1. **True/False** section – carefully read each of the following statements, then indicate whether each is true or false. (2 x 3 = 6 marks)

- a) Ms. Monteleone has seen only one sample with no garbage in it.
TRUE/FALSE
- b) Researchers are not certain of the exact location of a garbage patch thought to exist in the Sargasso Sea. TRUE/FALSE
- c) Research shows that the garbage patches are becoming larger and more polluted. TRUE/FALSE

2. According to the article, who is Charles Moore and what has he done? (2 marks)

3. How many garbage-filled gyres are thought to exist in the world's oceans? (1 mark)

4. Where does the garbage in the gyres come from? (2 marks)

5. Why is the plastic in the gyres so dangerous to both sea life and human life? (3 marks)

6. Actor Edward Norton is described as having narrated "a public-service announcement about plastic bags." How might this announcement relate to the garbage patch? (4 marks)

7. Does the article include any suggestions for cleaning up the garbage patch? If so, what is suggested? (2 marks)

8. Explain in your own words the meaning of each of the following words/expressions as used in the passage. (2 x 5 =10 marks)

- a) detritus (para. 1)
- b) pervades (para. 2)
- c) omnipresent (para. 4)
- d) leaching (para. 6)
- e) rainbow runner (para. 14)

Question 3: Summary (20 Marks)

Read the following passage and in not more than 100 words, write a summary of the author's main ideas about the causes of conflict.

The causes of conflict

The evidence taken from the observation of the behaviour of apes and children suggests that there are three clearly separable groups of simple causes for the outbreak of fighting and the exhibition of aggressiveness by individuals. One of the most common causes of fighting among both children and apes was over the *possession* of external objects. The disputed ownership of any desired object - food, clothes, toys, females, and the affection of others - was sufficient ground for an appeal to force. On Monkey Hill, disputes over females were responsible for the death of thirty out of thirty-three females. Two points are of particular interest to notice about these fights for possession. In the first place they are often carried to such an extreme that they end in the complete destruction of the objects of common desire. Toys are torn to pieces. Females are literally torn limb from limb. So overriding is the aggression once it has begun that it not only overflows all reasonable boundaries of selfishness but utterly destroys the object for which the struggle began and even the self for whose advantage the struggle was undertaken.

In the second place it is observable, at least in children, that the object for whose possession aggression is started may sometimes be desired by one person only or merely because it is desired by someone else. There were many cases observed by Dr. Isaacs where toys and other objects which had been discarded as useless were violently defended by their owners when they became the object of some other child's desire. The grounds of possessiveness may, therefore, be irrational in the sense that they are derived from inconsistent judgments of value. Whether sensible or irrational, contests over possession are commonly the occasion for the most ruthless use of force among children and apes. One of the commonest kinds of object arousing possessive desire is the notice, good will, affection, and service of other members of the group. Among children one of the commonest causes of quarrelling was 'jealousy' - the desire for the exclusive possession of the interest and affection of someone else, particularly the adults in charge of the children. This form of behaviour is sometimes classified as a separate cause of conflict under the name of 'rivalry' or 'jealousy'. But, in point of fact, it seems to us that it is only one variety of possessiveness. The object of desire is not a material object - that is the only difference. The object is the interest and affection of other persons. What is wanted, however, is the exclusive right to that interest and affection - a property in emotions instead of in things. As subjective emotions and as causes of conflict, jealousy and rivalry are fundamentally similar to the desire for the uninterrupted possession of toys or food. Indeed, very often the persons, property which is desired, are the sources of toys and food.

Possessiveness is, then, in all its forms a common cause of fighting. If we are to look behind the mere facts of behaviour for an explanation of this phenomenon, a teleological cause is not far to seek. The exclusive right to objects of desire is a clear and simple advantage to the possessor. It carries with it the certainty and continuity of satisfaction. Where there is only one claimant to a good, frustration and the possibility of loss is reduced to a minimum. It is, therefore, obvious that, if

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the ends of the self are the only recognized ends, the whole powers of the agent, including the fullest use of his available force, will be used to establish and defend exclusive rights to possession.

Another cause of aggression closely allied to possessiveness is the tendency for children and apes greatly to resent the intrusion of a stranger into their group. A new child in the class may be laughed at, isolated, and disliked and even set upon and pinched and bullied. A new monkey may be poked and bitten to death. It is interesting to note that it is only strangeness within a similarity of species that is resented. Monkeys do not mind being joined by a goat or a rat. Children do not object when animals are introduced to the group. Indeed, such novelties are often welcomed. But when monkeys meet a new monkey or children a strange child, aggression often occurs. This suggests strongly that the reason for the aggression is fundamentally possessiveness. The competition of the newcomers is feared. The present members of the group feel that there will be more rivals for the food or the attention of the adults.

Finally, another common source of fighting among children is a failure or frustration in their own activity. A child will be prevented either by natural causes such as bad weather or illness or by the opposition of some adult from doing something he wishes to do at a given moment - sail his boat or ride the bicycle. The child may also frustrate itself by failing, through lack of skill or strength, to complete successfully some desired activity. Such a child will then in the ordinary sense become 'naughty.' He will be in a bad or surly temper. And, what is of interest from our point of view, the child will indulge in aggression - attacking and fighting other children or adults. Sometimes the object of aggression will simply be the cause of frustration, a straightforward reaction. The child will kick or hit the nurse who forbids the sailing of his boat. But sometimes - indeed, frequently - the person or thing that suffers the aggression is quite irrelevant and innocent of offence. The angry child will stamp the ground or box the ears of another child when neither the ground nor the child attacked is even remotely connected with the irritation or frustration.

Of course, this kind of behaviour is so common that everyone feels it to be obvious and to constitute no serious scientific problem. That a small boy should pull his sister's hair because it is raining does not appear to the ordinary unreflecting person to be an occasion for solemn scientific inquiry. He is, as we should all say, 'in a bad temper.' Yet it is not, in fact, really obvious either why revenge should be taken on entirely innocent objects, since no good to the aggressor can come of it, or why children being miserable should seek to make others miserable also. It is just a fact of human behaviour that cannot really be deduced from any general principle of reason. But it is, as we shall see, of very great importance for our purpose. It shows how it is possible, at the simplest and most primitive level, for aggression and fighting to spring from an entirely irrelevant and partially hidden cause. Fighting to possess a desired object is straightforward and rational, however disastrous its consequences, compared with fighting that occurs because, in a different and unrelated activity, some frustration has barred the road to pleasure. The importance of this possibility for an understanding of group conflict must already be obvious.

(From *Personal Aggressiveness and War* by E. F. M. Durbin and John Bowlby)

QUESTION 4: Cloze Test (20 marks)

Write numbers 1 – 20 in a column on your answer sheet. Next to each, write ONE word that will correctly fill the gap in the passage below.

LEARNING TO LOVE ONESELF

Ask an American schoolchild what he or she is learning in school these days and you might even get a reply, provided you ask it in Spanish. But don't bother, here's the answer: Americans nowadays are not learning any [1] the things that we learned in our day, like reading and writing. Apparently these are considered *fusty* old subjects, [2....] by white males to oppress women and minorities.

What are they learning? In a Vermont college town I found [3] answer sitting in a toy store book rack, next to typical kids' books [4] *'Heather Has Two Mommies and Daddy is Dysfunctional'*. It's a teacher's guide called *'Happy To Be Me'*, subtitled *'Building Self Esteem'*.

Self-esteem, as it [5] out, is a big subject in American classrooms. Many American schools see building it as important as [6] reading and writing. They call it "**whole language**" teaching, borrowing terminology from *the granola people* to compete [7....] the education marketplace.

No one ever spent a moment building my [8] when I was in school. In fact, from the day I first stepped inside a classroom my self-esteem [9....] one big demolition site. All that mattered was "the subject," be it geography, history, or mathematics. I was praised when I remembered [10....] "near", "fit", "friendly", "pleasing", "like" and their opposites took the dative case in Latin. I was reviled when I forgot what a cosine was good [11.....] Generally I lived my school years beneath a torrent of *castigation* so consistent I eventually ceased to hear it, as people who live [12....] the sea eventually stop hearing the waves.

Schools have changed. *Reviling* is out, for one thing. More important, subjects have [13.....] Whereas I learned English, modern kids learn something called "language skills." Whereas I learned writing, modern kids learn [14....] called "communication". Communication, the book tells us, is seven per cent words, 23 per cent facial expression, 20 per cent tone of voice, and 50 per cent body [15.....] So this column, with its carefully chosen words, would earn me at most a grade of seven per cent. That is, if the school even gave out something as oppressive and demanding as grades.

The result is that, in place of English classes, American children [16....] getting a course in *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Consider the new attitude toward journal writing: I remember one high school English class when [17....] were required to keep a journal. The idea was to emulate those great writers who confided in diaries, searching their souls and *honing* their critical thinking on paper.

'Happy To Be Me' states that journals are a great way for students to get in touch [18....] their feelings. Tell students they can write one sentence or a whole page. Reassure them that no one, not even you, will read [19....] they write. After the unit, hopefully all students will be feeling good [20....] themselves and will want to share some of their entries with the class."

There was a time when no self-respecting book for English teachers would use "great" or "hopefully" that way. Moreover, back then the purpose of English courses (an antique term for "Unit") was not to help students "feel good about themselves." Which is good, because all that reviling didn't make me feel particularly good about anything.

Source : Adapted from the South China Morning Post, 13.08.95