

THE UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

MAIN EXAMINATION 2008

KWALUSENI CAMPUS

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 8 pages including the cover sheet.

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

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

(Note: anorexia is a psychological condition that makes someone stop eating. Bulimia is a psychological condition that makes someone eat too much.)

Disturbance in the body politic

Once unknown in South Africa, cases of anorexia among black women there have soared since the end of apartheid. Why? Sarah Duguid reports

- 1 In 1920 American women were finally recognised as legitimate citizens when they were given the right to vote. In that same year the first Miss America pageant took place. So while on the surface they were empowered with equal rights to men, that empowerment was diluted by a timely reminder that they must not forget to be women. They were still going to be judged according to who had the loveliest waist or the prettiest hair.
- 2 A similar phenomenon occurred in South Africa in 1994 with the collapse of apartheid, which enshrined systems not just of race, but also of gender discrimination. For the first time black women could (theoretically, at least) be whatever they wanted to be. In the same year South Africa's first case of anorexia in a black woman was recorded. Black South Africa has since seen a surge in the number of cases of anorexia and bulimia.
- 3 At one time eating disorders were thought to be the domain of white, middle-class girls, but a recent joint study by the University of Zululand and Northumbria University of body perception among 40 British and 40 Zulu girls found that more Zulu women appeared to suffer from eating problems than their British counterparts. More than half appeared to have erratic eating behaviour, either not eating for periods of time or vomiting after eating. Many of them said it was because they wanted to look less like their mothers and more like Western girls. Today, almost 10 years after that first case, there are thought to be as many black as white women with eating disorders in urban areas.
- 4 Empowerment brings with it a new set of problems for women. "If your position in society changes, what happens to your identity?" asks Professor Christopher Szabo, principal psychiatrist in the eating disorders clinic at the state-run Tara hospital in Johannesburg. "There is an inverse relationship between empowerment and self-acceptance. At a time when women are experiencing such a high level of empowerment there is a very low level of self-acceptance. It's a contradiction. Someone can be whoever they want to be and yet they choose to squeeze into stereotypes of eating, shape and physical size." For many young women the words "You can be whatever you want to be" are read as "You have to be everything you can be and you must be the best at it."
- 5 Graham Alexander is a clinical psychologist who specialises in the treatment of eating disorders at the privately run Crescent clinic in Cape Town. He treats mainly white, middle-class girls who, he says, are also feeling the effects of the social

change: "There has been an increase in pressures in our society. We get anxious with any change, even if it is for the better. There are university quotas and there is no guaranteed employment like there was before. Young people leave school and then struggle to get into university and struggle to find a sustaining career."

6 Traditionally black women have cherished a curvy figure: this is a social group that has always thought a big bum the sexiest thing a woman could have. And studies have found that in societies where plumpness is celebrated, there are none of the associated health problems seen in the West. In countries where being overweight is considered a curable illness the health problems begin. Of course, it is not quite as curable as people like to think. Ninety-nine per cent of people who lose weight pile it back on as soon as they take their eyes off the scales and, hardly surprisingly, 70% of dieters are found to be depressed.

7 Researchers discovered that in rural areas many women still say they wish they were bigger. But in cities, where Western culture has taken hold, black women, like white women, always want to be slimmer. Being thin connotes success, self-control and self-discipline and, in a pattern that has also been seen in the US, as non-whites become integrated into white, urban culture and try to get ahead within that environment, they feel the need to slim down.

8 At Waverly high school for girls in Johannesburg, every student in the two classes of girls I spoke to could tell me a story about either or both of her parents telling her she was physically unacceptable. One 14-year-old said: "Your parents want you to look like someone else. My mother teases me when I want food and calls me a giant. I never eat at home because of my mother." A 17-year-old's grandmother told her to make herself sick after eating so that she didn't put on weight. Another mother buys her daughter outsize clothes and tells her that if she continues eating, she will soon be able to fit into them.

9 In the end, unsurprisingly, it often comes down to boys. As one student pointed out, "Fly guys only want skinny girls. A fat girl might like a fly guy but he would never go out with her." Jameson, a recent graduate and migrant from a rural area to the city, says that when he was growing up he admired bigger girls. Now, though, he says he would never go out with "a woman who walks with a rumble". There is little wonder that many of the girls are confused. Caught between the old and the new, and required to embody both with equal panache, they are left not quite sure what they are meant to be. And the depressing result is that being the future of a "new" country is wreaking havoc on their health.

Questions

- 1 Explain the words “a similar phenomenon” in ¶ 2. What is the similarity?
[3 marks]
- 2 Here are words taken from the text. They are followed by some definitions. Match the word to its correct definition. Answer using the letters and numbers only. e.g. a – 6, b – 3 etc. [2 marks each]

- a. dilute ¶ 1
- b. enshrine ¶ 2
- c. surge ¶ 2
- d. domain ¶ 3
- e. counterpart ¶ 3
- f. inverse relationship ¶ 4
- g. stereotypes ¶ 4
- h. cherish ¶ 6
- i. giant
- j. outsize ¶ 8
- k. panache ¶ 9
- l. havoc ¶ 9

- 1 enthusiastic manner or style
- 2 an abnormally large person
- 3 general destruction
- 4 conforming to a fashion
- 5 treat with pride and affection
- 6 reduce or diminish
- 7 an area which belongs only to one group or person
- 8 fix into law, as if part of a religion
- 9 greatly increase
- 10 when one goes up, the other comes down
- 11 corresponding to others of the same type
- 12 the largest available

3. In your own words, give TWO reasons why white women are anorexic.
[3 marks]

Read the following passage and then follow the instructions at the end.

HIV – Despair and Hope

Richard Dowden

- 1 In ten years' time the number of orphans from Aids will reach 42 million, the UN conference in Barcelona heard this week. A veteran commentator recently visited southern Africa, where he met families struck by the virus. He met, too, the remarkable women who care for them. These women, who are also infected, are transforming Africa in a very different way.
- 2 The full horror of Aids is only now beginning to strike Africa. Infection rates may be levelling off but the dying has only just begun. In Africa the virus has already killed 13.7 million people. About 28 million are infected and will die by 2020. In Botswana the infection rate is nearly 40 per cent, in Zimbabwe it is about 33 per cent and in the rest of southern Africa it is more than 20 per cent and rising.
- 3 The United Nations agency UNAIDS warns that countries such as China and Indonesia and states of the former Soviet Union could soon face a similar plague. Even when the level of infections start to fall, the death rate from Aids will continue to rise for about 10 years as those infected die. UNAIDS estimates that while 20 million people have died from Aids in the past 20 years, more than three times that number will die in the next 20. This will leave millions of orphans. In some places one child in ten will be an orphan.
- 4 "Condomising" – a new African word – may help to prevent the spread of the HIV virus in richer urban areas but in the poorer countryside condoms have not even begun to be part of the culture. Aids workers in Africa have not yet found a way to persuade people to change their behaviour to curb the virus's remorseless spread. Some Africans believe that it is condoms that spread Aids. Most anti-Aids campaigns are based on the concept that talking openly about Aids and sex is the best way of getting the message across. Slogans urging people to abstain, delay the age of first sex, stick to one partner, are pumped out of television, radio, churches, schools, billboards and office posters. Children younger than ten sing anti-Aids songs. The level of awareness is high, but behaviour is not changing quickly or widely enough.
- 5 And the constant bombardment can be counter-productive. In Botswana Aids is called the "radio disease". Many people who have changed their behaviour admit that it was a death in the family or among friends that made them wake up to the danger. When most fall sick they still go to the traditional healer for a cure or to a witch doctor to discover who has bewitched them and made them sick. President Thabo Mbeki's public questioning of orthodox science on Aids has left a huge leadership gap in South Africa and the region, undermining the basic message that unprotected sex can spread the virus and that the virus leads to Aids. This week the UNAIDS conference in Barcelona heard that a vaccine for HIV could be ready within five years. But will it be affordable and available for the millions of people who are most vulnerable? Even if it is, a vaccination will be no help to the generation that is already infected and cannot afford antiretroviral drugs. Populations are normally shaped like a stepped pyramid with the young at the broad bottom and the tapering top representing the old, but Africa's pyramid is being dramatically hollowed out at the middle and bottom as the young and middle-aged die off

dramatically hollowed out at the middle and bottom as the young and middle-aged die off and fewer children are born. The mature productive middle generation is dying out; without them society is unable to support itself.

6 A pattern is setting in among poor families. In the short term a family breadwinner or homemaker dies and the children become poorer, some starving to death. This year drought has struck southern Africa, making survival even more precarious. In the medium term the children, especially the girls, drop out of school. That means they will be poor, more vulnerable to relationships that expose them to Aids or marriages in which they are powerless. In the long term, such women may contract Aids themselves and die young or may give birth to HIV-positive children. Even if they and their children survive, they will not have the skills to make a living or provide money for the education of their own children. Research identifies the education levels of mothers as the crucial factor in infant mortality rates. The recent gains in helping the children of the poor survive their first five years may be lost.

7 It is hard to predict where this will lead, but one scenario is that millions of children will grow up unparented, never knowing a mother's loving cuddle or a father's guiding hand. Such a generation could become semi-feral, living like animals, deprived of socialisation or education, lacking the fundamental human attachments of family, owning nothing but the rags they stand in and unable to keep themselves alive except by theft and violence. In Africa's fragile states such a generation could easily become a pool of ruthless warriors for power-hungry politicians. Whole regions of Africa could be destabilised.

8 And the economic impact on the continent will be severe. The gap between Africa and the rest of the world is already widening alarmingly; as it strikes down skilled people, Aids will make it worse. Governments will be forced to spend more on health while education will come under severe pressure as teachers' numbers decline. Funerals are costly. In Africa the bereaved family traditionally kills a cow to feed all the relatives and neighbours at the wake and this can cost half a year's income. Some Churches in Africa are trying to persuade families to cut down on funeral expenditure and make sure that powerful but distant relatives do not take the property of widows and orphans.

9 Orphans are the most vulnerable in this bleak new social landscape. In the villages and poor urban areas of Africa there are dozens of households now headed by a 14-year-old or an even younger child. Africa's traditional extended family support system is breaking down. In southern Africa the family was already under pressure from the apartheid system, which lured men to the big cities for work but did not allow them to take their families with them. Many set up second families in the cities and abandoned their rural families or returned once a year to bring money. In the late 1980s and 1990s they started to bring back the HIV virus too, spreading it deep into poor rural communities. They fell sick and died, but not before Aids became rampant.

10 Already over-stretched, families are beginning to turn away the children of their dead brothers, sisters and cousins. They are left to fend for themselves. Words that a few years ago were rarely heard in Africa – "abandoned children", "child abuse", "depression" and even "child suicide" – are now heard daily. Abandoned children are abused and exploited by relatives and guardians. Orphaned boys, adopted by uncles or guardians, are kept out of school and made to work for nothing on farms. Young girls are sexually abused and raped.

11 Afflicted by a catastrophe such as Aids, which threatens the very foundations of society, some will exploit the suffering and make it worse. But others find a deep resource of determination and energy to fight back. As I travelled around the region visiting child-headed households and orphans I noticed that the most dynamic and effective organisations at local and national level were those headed by women who were themselves HIV-positive. The trauma somehow liberated and galvanised them. They have become the main activists in the battle against Aids.

12 Siphwe Hlophe from Swaziland had just turned 40 in 1999 when she won a scholarship to study agricultural economics in Britain. She has four children: the eldest is 22, the youngest 11. One of the conditions of her scholarship was an Aids test; she took it as a matter of routine, not thinking there was a problem. When she turned out to be HIV-positive, her husband left her, she lost her scholarship and thought she was going to die. But she came through the shock and decided to do something for people living with Aids.

13 Siphwe formed a group called SWAPOL: Swaziland for Positive Living. It now has 150 members, mostly HIV-positive women who organise meetings to discuss Aids and spread the message to children. They counsel others who discover that they are HIV-positive, visit terminally ill people in their homes, make sure they get medical care, educate people about better diets – a crucial factor for people living with Aids – and battle with headmasters who turn away Aids orphans. They also work to make sure grandmothers and orphans get government allowances. This astoundingly difficult but inspiring work is accompanied by a great deal of laughter and song. They seem to be saying: “I am going to die of an incurable disease but before I do I am going to change the world.”

14 In fighting the battle against Aids and trying to prevent others becoming infected, these women are actually fighting a bigger war, a war against the codes of modern African societies that leave people, especially women, powerless and vulnerable. Whatever Aids does to African society, these women who have lost their fear will also change it for ever.

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Instructions:

Write at least one but not more than two pages on ONE of the following topics. Your answers should be in your own words, but based on the information in the passage above. Do not copy sentences from the passage.

1 What is the role of women in combating HIV in Africa?

OR

2 Read again paragraphs 4-5. Explain in your own words why the anti-AIDS campaigns can be “counter-productive”.

OR

3 What signs of hope are there to be seen amidst the AIDS catastrophe?

QUESTION 3

ESSAY

40mks

Swaziland is a small country, but it has two of everything, (dualities) including:

Two languages

Two currencies

Two legal systems

Two kinds of marriage

Two ways of dealing with illness

Two kinds of agriculture

Two kinds of land ownership

Two political systems.

Write an essay in about two pages responding to **ONE** of the following instructions:

- a. Take one example of such a pair and discuss the confusion it can cause.
 - b. Describe how duality has come to happen.
 - c. Discuss whether the situation described is good for the country
 - d. Compare Swaziland with another country in this respect
 - e. Discuss the future of Swaziland with respect to one of the above
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