

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI
DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
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TITLE OF PAPER: **ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS**
 ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP)

COURSE CODE: **ACS111**

TIME ALLOWED: **2 HRS**

INSTRUCTIONS: **1) WRITE THE NAME OF YOUR FACULTY AND**
 PROGRAMME ON THE COVER OF YOUR ANSWER
 BOOKLET

2) THE QUESTION PAPER CONTAINS TWO SECTIONS
(A and B). ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM EACH SECTION.

TOTAL MARKS: **100**

This paper contains 9 pages including the cover sheet

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SECTION A: READING COMPREHENSION

[50Marks]

TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

1) In a country like India, it is increasingly becoming difficult to alienate the element of altruism attached to education, from the massive profits involved in this sector. An unfortunate result of merging the two has been the higher education system of the country. It is overly regulated, and thoroughly under-monitored. Technical education, as a result, is losing its sheen due to the presence of a large number of mediocre and below-average private engineering colleges all over the country.

2) Technical education is regulated by several agencies. The All-India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has been the apex body for proper planning and coordinating the development of technical as well management education. The University Grants Commission is responsible for affiliations. The National Board of Accreditation, which was initially set up by AICTE, is now an autonomous body, with an objective of quality assurance and relevance in education. There has been a **dramatic upsurge** in the number of technical institutions in the country, especially in the last decade. The AICTE has been charged with mindless McDonaldisation of technical and management education all over the country. **Education began as a medium of philanthropy for the rich.** Today, anybody with a decent amount of start-up capital can establish an Engineering College.

3) Most villages and small towns may not have stable power supply, but they surely boast of a technical institute – churning out students by the minute, armed with stacks of degree certificates, but sadly zilch technical knowledge. Education was clearly **delineated** from commerce by the Supreme Court. However, today these education institutes, which have **mushroomed** all over the country, have become a medium of earning quick money. Their growth strangely, has been highly skewed. Over 51.17 per cent of technical institutes are in South India, and barely 6 per cent in the Eastern part of the country. States like Mizoram, Nagaland and Daman and Diu do not have a single Engineering College.

4) The British successfully established world-class universities like Oxford and Cambridge in England. However, India was left grappling with the after-effects of Macaulay's minute on English education. After all, we were the hapless inheritors of their legacy. They did not emphasise upon education for the masses. The British education catered only to the schooling needs of the elite.

5) Although India freed herself from the shackles of the British empire nearly seven decades ago, she remains imprisoned in the mesh of affiliating bodies. These act as inspectors, reminiscent of the license-raj days. Rather than emerge as facilitators, affiliating bodies have been interfering in curricula, dictating physical layout of the institution, student intake, etc. This system of affiliating bodies remains in only four countries all over the world, namely, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India.

6) The IITs and IIMs, being institutions of national importance, are beyond the ambit of affiliations. However, a reputed institution like the Indian School of Business (ISB) chose to remove itself from the **drudgery** of affiliations. The result is, a world-class institution boasting of global faculty, robust infrastructural facilities, and well-qualified students, who can compete adeptly with their international counterparts. Unfortunately, the products of most of the private engineering colleges lack the requisite skills, and hence are deemed unemployable. A recent NASSCOM report has suggested that only 25 percent of IT graduates are employable.

7) In the next three years, India will be the youngest nation, with 64 per cent of its population belonging to the working age group. Still, it is indeed shameful, that India being a young nation, with the largest pool of technical and scientific workers, is unable to fulfill the current industry needs. Ours is a nation of the largest number of English language speakers. Knowledge has been instrumental in **catapulting our economy** onto the global platform. We have been the largest beneficiaries of outsourcing. However, times are changing rapidly. The same services will soon be provided by other nations at cheaper costs. The Chinese are looking to **make a transition** from a manufacturing to a knowledge economy. They are slowly, but surely switching from Mandarin to the English language, and hence connecting with the world. With skills on their side, language will not remain a barrier for too long.

8) It has become imperative that India gathers its act together, and begins to **resurrect** its technical education. The magic word for times to come would be “innovation”. A nation which can innovate will emerge as the next superpower. Innovation comes from deep-rooted technical skills, and superior managerial knowledge. The need of the hour is to break free from the fetters of affiliations, and allow the institutions to function in an autonomous manner. In this way education can aid future technical force to generate wealth rather than the other way round.

(Adapted – Source- Jobs & Careers 6117)

Questions

1. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?
 - a. People of India have not been so enthusiastic about technical knowledge during the recent past.
 - b. Education in India is provided with a spirit of selfless service to the students.
 - c. Technical education in India has produced the largest number of skilled workers in the world.
 - d. None of the above.
2. According to the author, why has there been an unusual increase in technical education institutions in India?
 - a. To fulfill the increased demand of the potential students.
 - b. Philanthropists run these institutions.
 - c. Education in India is rewarding and profitable.
 - d. Owning a technical education institution is profitable.
3. Which of the following is true?
 - a. Technical Education in India is controlled by bodies having political affiliations.
 - b. A body comprising of philanthropists govern the technical education system in India.
 - c. Education institutions in India are controlled by more than one body.
 - d. All of the above.
4. Which of the following is the main function of the University Grants commission of India?
 - a. It regulates the functioning of technical education institutions of India.
 - b. It grants affiliations to technical education institutions in India.
 - c. It ensures to implement policy matters in technical education institutions of India
 - d. None of those given as options.
5. What does the clause “to make transition” (Par. 7) mean as used in the passage?
 - a. To have a positive effect on something.
 - b. To extend help to someone.
 - c. To pass from one state to another.
 - d. To cross all limits.

6. According to the passage, what is the position of the Supreme Court of India about technical institutions?

- a. Uniform fee pattern must be implemented in these institutions throughout the country.
- b. These institutions should not make education a money spinning machine.
- c. Quality education must be imparted even to students in far rural areas.
- d. Quality education must improve commerce.

7. Which of the following has the meaning opposite to 'delineated'? (Par. 3)

- a. Recognised
- b. Ambiguous
- c. Distinct
- d. Proscribed

8. According to the author, what was the shortfall of the British education system in India?

- a. To impart education to selected strata of people of the country.
- b. To impart education to all the able and intelligent people of the country.
- c. To educate the most deserving and desiring people of the country.
- d. To establish world class universities.

9. Which of the following statements is incorrect?

- a. More than half of the population of India will be working class in the near future.
- b. The technical institutions have grown unevenly in different states of the country.
- c. The Indian education system was inherited from the British.
- d. None of the above.

10. What does the idea of technical education 'losing its sheen' (Par. 1) refer to?

- a. Losing its shine.
- b. Losing its appeal.
- c. An expensive education system.
- d. A boring education system.

[20 marks]

11. What does the statement '*Education began as a medium of philanthropy for the rich*' (Par. 2) mean? [3 marks]
12. List two changes that are required for education to help India's technical force of tomorrow to earn an income? [4 marks]
13. Explain what '*...India would be the youngest nation...*' (Par. 7) mean. [2 marks]
14. What is the purpose of '*however*' in Paragraph 4? [3 marks]
15. Explain what the following words and phrases mean as used in the passage:
- a. **Dramatic upsurge** (Par. 2)
 - b. **Mushroomed** (Par. 3)
 - c. **Catapulting our economy** (Par. 7)
 - d. **Resurrect** (Par. 8) [12 marks]
16. What is the central idea of the passage? [2 marks]
17. In Paragraph 3, the author says technical institutes boast of '*churning out students by the minute*'.
- a. What does this mean? [2 marks]
 - b. Based on this statement, what would you say is the writer's attitude towards what is happening? [2 marks]

SECTION B: SUMMARY**[50Marks]**

The following article is about what to do when you have unintentionally said something that could potentially hurt a friend or a loved one. Read the article and then in not more than 200 words (one page), summarise the steps the author suggests you take to ensure that you extend a befitting apology to those you have hurt.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE SAID THE WRONG THING
(By Anna Goldfarb, The New York Times)

Oops! You asked a recently fired friend-of-a-friend how his job is going. The words left your lips before you could scoop them back in. Inquiring about the biggest stressor in his life, the one he was praying no one would bring up, was an innocent mistake. Sure, you apologised profusely, but you can tell he is smarting. This is a common and painful part of being a social creature. But apologising for saying the wrong thing requires a different kind of apology than, say, spilling coffee on a stranger's purse or running late for work. When you make an inappropriate comment or insensitive joke, the wound is internal, which can make patching things up more fraught.

It is unrealistic to expect to be a perfect communicator. If you strive to never misspeak, you are probably going to end up making it worse for yourself, "because then there's more guilt, anger, upset feelings when the miscommunications and the hurt feelings occur," said Don Cole, a licensed marriage and family therapist. As Clinical Director of The Gottman Institute, an organization that brings research-based help to couples and trains therapists to be more effective as relationship counselors, Dr. Cole regularly sees couples who struggle with miscommunication. As it turns out, successful couples say the wrong thing just as often as unsuccessful couples do. The difference is that successful couples know how to repair hurt feelings when they have caused them. We can apply this repair strategy not just to romantic partners, but to anyone we are liable to unintentionally offend: friends, acquaintances and co-workers.

First, you need to assess the harm. Be open and vulnerable with yourself about perhaps the damage that has been done, said Andrea Bonior, a licensed clinical psychologist. You might think you need to apologise for one throwaway comment, but to this other person, this might be part of a larger pattern of thoughtlessness on your part. In fact, they could be angrier than you thought especially if your remark touched a nerve. When we find out we have hurt someone, we have these instincts that pop in to want to restore balance. If you are not clear on what you said that was hurtful, reach out and request the

person to help explain what it is you did that harmed them. Do not be insensitive and say, “tell me why you’re mad,” but ask, “What did I do?”

Secondly, do not catastrophise. People who are prone to guilty thoughts tend to be harder on themselves. They will say things like, “I can’t believe I said that. I’m a terrible person.” If you find yourself in a shame spiral, Dr. Bonior suggests reframing your internal narrative about the event into something more realistic, supportive and helpful, like: “This situation touches a chord. I’m feeling ashamed, but I can make this better. Everyone makes mistakes.”

You might also be tempted to put the issue on the back burner, but that would be a mistake. Not only will you spend more time worrying about the situation, but the longer you delay bringing up the gaffe, the more awkward it will be. Dr. Bonior suggests setting a period of time to lick your wounds (an hour, a day), but try to make amends as soon as possible. Sometimes when we procrastinate on having a difficult conversation, we end up not having the talk at all, which is what actually causes irreparable damage to the relationship. She says that it is not the initial offense that makes matters worse but how it was handled.

Once you get the opportunity to apologise, take responsibility. Resist the urge to get defensive or make excuses, like, “Well, I didn’t mean it,” or, “Why are you so sensitive? It was clearly a joke.” Avoid quibbling over specifics, and just let the other person have their feelings. Make it clear that you do not take what you did lightly. Studies show that labelling your feelings can help manage anxiety and depression. So saying things like, “I’m ashamed I said that,” or “I’m appalled I hurt you,” might alleviate some of your anguish over the situation. However, you do not want to make yourself the victim.

It is tempting to use this time to clarify your intent — you might be feeling under attack, and it is understandable to want to clear your name. But unless the person asked what you meant by your comment or joke, do not go there. What you intended to say is irrelevant in a conversation centred on the negative impact of your words. It is also not productive to argue whose version of events is correct. Memory is not a digital recording; it is an emotional encoding of an event. Accept that what the person heard and felt was real: let them know that your comment was inappropriate and you understand why they are upset. This way, you are validating their pain.

Being genuine in your apology goes a long way. Make sure your apology comes from your heart. Avoid canned phrases like, “I’m sorry if you were hurt.” That language distances yourself from your actions and can feel hollow to the recipient. Body language, facial signals and vocal pitch are all lost in written communication, which makes email and text messages less than ideal when broaching sensitive topics like an apology. Experts say it is best to deliver an apology face-to-face if possible. Speaking over the phone is the next best option.

Explain how it will not happen again. Sharing what the situation taught you will reassure this person that you have learned from your mistake. Furthermore, educating yourself and making an effort to correct your behaviour shows you are operating in good faith. For instance, if you keep mispronouncing a co-worker’s name, own up to your mistake. Do not bicker or say, “Well, it’s a really tricky name and I’ve never heard it before” . It is best to simply say, “Hey, I’m really sorry I did that. I’m glad you told me and I will work on getting it right.”

If, however, the other person is not able to move past the transgression after you have given it your best effort, disengage. You can offer a sincere apology and own up to your mistakes, but you cannot make somebody accept it. Sometimes words do irreparable harm. No one owes you a relationship. If you have harmed someone, there is only so much you can attempt to repair. But if they do not want to, they do not have to. You as the transgressor have no right to begrudge them. Still, try to embrace the opportunity to understand the other person’s lived experience and identify with their pain, even if you played a part in causing it. Not only will you be a more considerate friend and colleague, but by looking at the world through their eyes, you will be more likely to make the other person feel safe, heard and understood.

(Adapted from: <https://www.nytimes.com>)