

NEW FULCRUM
COLLEGE ENGLISH

SPEED
READING

新支点大学英语
快速阅读

主 编 高 霄

2

附趣味训练多媒体学习光盘

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前言

在当今社会，面对报纸、杂志和网络带来的海量信息冲击，快速搜索、正确理解并有效利用信息的能力变得尤为重要，而快速阅读则是培养这种能力的有效途径，这也正是开发此套教材的初衷。

《新支点大学英语快速阅读》作为精品课程建设成果，由高霄教授主编，由具有丰富教学与科研经验的教师团队参编，适用于全国高等院校非英语专业学习者。教材编写以《大学英语课程教学要求》为指导，所有素材由参编团队精心筛选，配套练习设计历经编者认真思考、反复推敲与多方修改而成。教材共分四册，每册十个单元，每单元包含三篇主题相近的阅读素材。

本套教材具有以下三个特色。

第一，素材丰富多样。所选素材大多源自英语国家最新的报纸、杂志和主流网站。语言地道，内容新颖，体裁多样，题材广泛；素材话题涉及社会、家庭、教育、环保、健康、科技、职业、婚姻和体育等方面，贴近大学生生活，兼顾科学与人文知识，具有较强的知识性和趣味性。

第二，编写理念科学。教材开发严格遵循规范、科学的程序，并紧密结合教学实践，依据学生实际情况，经编写人员集思广益、反复讨论，充分发挥团队协作精神编写而成。选材方面，先确定单元主题，然后广泛搜寻与主题相关的素材，经所有成员反复筛选，最终确定最合适的素材。题目设计方面，不仅编写人员围绕材料内容精心设计题目，而且所有题目都经一定数量相应水平的学习者认真试做（被试的专业、年级、人数和语言水平等变量都得到规范控制），然后根据试做结果的统计数据（如难度系数、区分度和错误率）对试题进行反复甄选和修订。理论指导方面，为了改善阅读习惯，编者专门论述阅读策略，供学习者借鉴和参考。

第三，难易梯度合理。第一、二册与第三、四册之间在素材长度、题目数量与难度等方面形成梯度；每个单元内部的三篇素材也都根据试做结果，按由易到难的顺序排列，最易的用一颗星标识，最难的用五颗星标识，这有助于学习者加强自我监控，逐步提高阅读能力。

在使用本教材过程中，编者建议学习者遵循三个原则。

第一，速度和理解并重原则。练习过程中，力求避免重速度、轻理解的做法。没有理解的阅读不能称之为阅读，正确的做法是在理解的基础上逐步提高速度。编者建议学习者记录实际完成时间，然后对照建议用时监控自己的阅读速度及理解质量方面所取得的进步。

第二，持之以恒原则。阅读习惯是长期形成的，短期内很难发生质的改变，要避免急躁情绪。通过坚持不懈地练习，循序渐进，最终养成良好的阅读习惯，提高阅读能力。

第三，纸质教材与光盘并用原则。本教材配有光盘，学习者在使用纸质教材的同时，也可以根据自己的需求和实际水平，在光盘上选择恰当的内容与模式进行相应练习。

编者
2013年6月

快速阅读策略

1. 提高阅读速度的必要性和可行性

在当今社会，信息的重要性日益凸显。信息被公认为是社会发展的主要动力和财富，无论是国家还是个人，未来竞争的胜负在很大程度上都将取决于对信息和知识的拥有程度。尽管报纸、杂志和网络等信息资源对于每个人来说都是开放的，但能在最短时间内高效获取、充分理解和有效使用信息并不是每人都具有的能力。因此能在纷繁芜杂的信息海洋中搜索、汲取有效信息，便成为一项重要的技能，而培养良好的阅读能力，是提高这种技能的有效途径。

实践证明，阅读速度是可以通过训练提高的。根据国外调查结果来看，普通成人的阅读速度为每分钟200到250词，大部分大学生的阅读速度是每分钟300词，快者可达到每分钟600词。经过训练的国际速读比赛选手阅读速度更是惊人，顶级选手阅读速度都在1 000到2 000词之间，而冠军的速度是每分钟4 700词，对阅读材料理解正确率高达67%。

2. 探究阅读速度慢的根源及建议

2.1 阅读速度慢的根源

要提高阅读速度，首先需了解阅读速度慢的原因。

第一，回视。阅读过程中，很多读者习惯性地或无意识地返回到前几句以加深理解。一旦养成这种习惯便会反复阅读已读过的词句，从而减慢阅读速度，浪费阅读时间。改掉这一毛病需要有意识地进行相应训练。

第二，默读。阅读时，一些人习惯默读或轻声读，即无意识在心中或轻声地把每一个词转化为声音。如此阅读速度就会类似于说话或朗读速度，速度自然会明显降低。

第三，小意义单位阅读。意义单位的大小（长短）影响阅读速度。阅读意义单位一般分为三种：一是以单词为单位，二是以词块为单位，三是以句子为单位。这三种情况下，阅读单位由小变大，阅读速度也就逐级递增。阅读效率低的人，常常是小单位阅读，即每次只能扫描一个词，眼睛会停顿多次，既劳累又低效；而掌握正确阅读方法的人，阅读时眼睛会一次扫描多个词、句子甚或段落，阅读速度就会大幅提高。

2.2 建议

要提高阅读速度，必须克服不良阅读习惯，因此编者提出针对性建议，供学习者参考。

2.2.1 避免回视

回视主要有两个原因：（1）自信缺失——读者缺乏自信，不能确信自己对读过的内容确实已经理解；（2）理念偏颇——读者误认为慢读、细读、反复读才能充分理解阅读材料，久而久之，就养成了回视的习惯。

要改变这一现状，读者首先要纠正错误理念，阅读由易到难，增强自信心。其次，阅读过程中，读者可以先从心理暗示入手，阅读中有重读冲动的时候催促自己继续向前，逐渐消除心理依赖。若发现心理暗示难以奏效，可尝试用一张卡片或纸张遮住自己阅读过的字行，迫使自己读下去。

2.2.2 克服默读

养成默读习惯的读者需要通过默读进行意义转换，才能理解所读到的词句。理想状态是直接

理解所读到的材料，而不需要进行语码或意义转换。

首先，读者可以用食指或尺子作为“控制器”来调控自己的阅读速度。这里手指或尺子可以起到转移读者注意力的作用，随着手指或尺子在一行文字间停顿次数的减少，读者目光扫视的速度将快于默读的速度，默读的习惯也将慢慢地得以克服。

其次，读者可以尝试词块阅读法。默读必须具备一个条件，那就是逐词读出。利用我们的“周边视觉”进行分块阅读，眼睛按意群扫描，阅读时每次扫描多个词，从而减少默读的机会，最终克服这一习惯。

2.2.3 开阔视域

阅读速度不够快，其中一种可能是读者目光的覆盖面不够广。不少读者习惯于逐词阅读，在一行中眼睛会停顿多次。而阅读速度快的人批量阅读，即将一个段落的文字看作是一幅幅图片，每一次目光扫描几个词，快者甚至能一目数行。下面介绍两种非常有效的训练方法。

2.2.3.1 以指为尺

很多老师都告诉学生，阅读时绝对不能用手指点读。事实上，情况未必如此。阅读过程中，若能正确借助手指数（其实用一把尺子或一支圆珠笔也可以），对阅读大有帮助，即阅读中用食指引导目光，起初可以多停顿几次，慢慢地过渡到每行点两次，甚或一次，最终达到调节和控制速度与节奏的目的。这种以指为尺的作用主要体现在三个方面：控制速度、避免回视和纠正默读的习惯。

2.2.3.2 拓宽识别区域

识别区域指搜索信息时眼睛所扫描的有效范围。识别区域越宽，所摄取的信息就越多，阅读速度就越快。为了拓宽识别区域，学习者可从目光停顿次数入手进行练习。如下面的图例所示。

Reading is _△ actually _△ a very _△ complex process _△ that requires
a great deal of _△ active participation _△ on the part of _△ the reader.
It is an active thinking process _△ involving the interaction
between the reader and the print.

初始阶段，学习者在阅读每一行文字时眼睛可以多停顿几次，每隔一到两个词停顿一次。通过类似的、反复的训练，学习者识别的范围逐渐扩大，这样眼睛就可以基于意义群增加扫描的词数，从而减少停顿的次数。这同时要求眼睛有效地扫描意义群中的某个关键词，大脑在最短时间内摄入有效的信息。

2.2.3.3 词簇训练法

为提高阅读速度，学习者不要逐词去解码，而是直接理解连续的几个词。可以先随意选择2个词、3个词、4个词乃至更多的词，对其所形成的词簇进行计时练习，如：

young babies,	the older women,	sit and talk about,
get ready,	take the boats,	parts of the village

除了这种练习形式,还可以将这些词簇分在几行来进行阅读练习,以扩大眼睛的扫描面积。

one hundred	⋮	enough food	⋮	things
years	⋮	and people	⋮	are put into
(3词2行)	⋮	(4词2行)	⋮	five groups
	⋮		⋮	(6词3行)

经过长期练习,读者的目光可覆盖的范围将日渐扩大,阅读速度自然逐步提高。

3. 快速阅读策略

3.1 学会略读 (skimming)

“略读”意指阅读中避轻就重,略去不重要的部分,这是快速阅读中重要的阅读方法。日常生活中,读者阅读的材料中有些信息不是太重要,有些内容只是对材料主要观点起辅助作用,没有这些内容不会破坏整个阅读材料的完整性,略去这些内容也不会影响读者对整个材料的理解。

一般来说,阅读中可把重点放在几个主要部分。第一,题目。通过浏览文章或阅读材料的题目,读者可以快速地抓住材料的主题。第二,引言。多数文章的第一段起着引导全文的作用,告诉读者整篇文章所谈及的话题。第三,主题句。每个段落的首句往往可能是主题句,告诉读者段落的中心思想,这更符合演绎推理模式。段中的其他部分大多是对主题句的进一步阐述。第四,结论。结论部分一般在文章的最后一到两个自然段,会起到概括文章重点、明确作者观点的作用。

以上是阅读中的重点部分,言外之意,其他部分就是可略去的内容。掌握了这一方法,能帮助读者浏览大量的文本以查找所需要的信息,阅读速度会得到很大程度的提高。

3.2 掌握寻读 (scanning)

“寻读”意指扫描。如在会场找自己的朋友,并不需要看每个人的外表,而是略过那些不认识的人,直接寻找朋友的身影。

阅读中,读者常常要寻找特定数据或信息,并不需要通读整篇材料或整个章节,而且对于不同类别的材料,处理方式也有差异。如读报纸时,可以先浏览首版的栏目介绍和版面索引,定位自己感兴趣的专题。读杂志时,可以先看看目录,搜索自己感兴趣的文章和所在页面。阅读著作时,可以翻阅前面的目录,还可以借助书尾的关键词索引,寻找自己重点要阅读的内容。阅读文章时,首先浏览文章结构,搞清楚文章组织形式(如是按时间顺序组织还是根据所述内容的重要性排列),然后根据自己的需要在文章中最有可能的部分寻找需要的信息,或者在头脑中设定关键词的影像,从而在文章中扫视并寻找想要的信息。

3.3 扩大词汇量

阅读中,读者的词汇量越大,在阅读中遇到的障碍就越少,一般来说阅读速度也会越快。对于如何扩大词汇量,不同的人会选择不同的方法。有人推荐背诵单词,有人建议依靠篇章语境来记忆单词。阅读速度快的人更倾向于选择后者,因为词汇只有在实际使用环境中才有意义。人们也会主动去学习某些词汇,那么这些词汇也容易在大脑中扎根。国外研究表明,儿童和青少年时期人的词汇量增长最快,在青春期之后词汇增长速度明显放缓,因为在青春期之后让年轻人感到新奇并积极去探索的东西相对减少。

日常生活中,读者要努力创造机会使用所学到的词汇,不断唤醒那些休眠的词汇,从而加强对

词汇的记忆。日常阅读中,读者可以借鉴几种扩大词汇量的方法。首先,尝试阅读跨领域的材料。比如专业是文学的学习者,可以尝试阅读一些经济、商业领域的材料,这样可以扩大词汇面。第二,学会根据上下文推测生词意义,必要时查阅词典,这对词汇的理解和积累很有帮助。第三,掌握一些词根和词缀的意义及用法。

大部分英语词汇的词根源于拉丁语或希腊语,熟悉这些词根有助于直接猜测词的含义,试举几例。

词根学习范例

词 根	含 义	例 词
<i>ann</i>	<i>year</i>	<i>annual, anniversary</i>
<i>arch</i>	<i>first, ruler</i>	<i>archangel, monarch</i>
<i>aud</i>	<i>bear</i>	<i>auditory, audience</i>
<i>ced</i>	<i>to go</i>	<i>precede, exceed</i>
<i>aqua</i>	<i>water</i>	<i>aquatic</i>
<i>bio</i>	<i>life</i>	<i>biography, biology</i>
<i>cad</i>	<i>year</i>	<i>decade</i>
<i>vis</i>	<i>see</i>	<i>visible, supervise</i>

前缀学习范例

前 缀	含 义	例 词
<i>bi-</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>bicycle, bilateral</i>
<i>anti-</i>	<i>against</i>	<i>antibody, antiviral</i>
<i>fore-</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>forecast, forerunner</i>
<i>de-</i>	<i>remove, reduce</i>	<i>depress, degenerate</i>

后缀学习范例

后 缀	含 义	例 词
<i>-less</i>	<i>without</i>	<i>tireless, restless</i>
<i>-ful</i>	<i>full of</i>	<i>hopeful, respectful</i>
<i>-fy</i>	<i>to make</i>	<i>beautify, simplify</i>
<i>-wise</i>	<i>direction</i>	<i>clockwise, otherwise</i>

英语词汇的构成是有规律的,学习者只要掌握其构词特点,就可以举一反三,有效扩大词汇量,阅读速度也将会大幅提高。

3.4 结束语

以上介绍几种常用的快速阅读策略,但任何策略都不是一夜之间就能熟练掌握的,适量的练习必不可少。勤能补拙,学习者日常阅读中只要能坚持练习、总结与反思,经过一段时间有目的、讲策略的练习,阅读速度必然会提高。

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Unit 1

Passage 1 *Dealing with Reverse Culture Shock*

You're in a country where everything feels different. The food isn't what you're used to; the people don't make sense. It's sensory overload and you're bewildered by all the things around you — the language, the music, the faces, the smells.

Everyone is moving at lightning speed, and you're still staring at the food in the grocery store, confused about what to buy.

"I walked out of the ice cream aisle because I couldn't choose," said Erin Curtis, a Peace Corps volunteer. But she wasn't talking about her time in Kazakhstan. Curtis was referring to her trip to the local grocery in Lexington, South Carolina, last month.

Curtis, like many long-term volunteers and workers who return from abroad, was feeling what is known as reverse culture shock.

"You get used to a certain way of life over there," Curtis said, "and adjusting to things here now is difficult. You're trying to get your feet under you and keep up with everyone else; you're trying to figure out what is going on and the stuff you missed." For tips on how to avoid falling into a deep post-travel *funk* (恐惧), *CNN.com* asked for tips from the Peace Corps and volunteer travel company i-to-i, which organizes trips lasting from a week to several months or more.

Be Prepared

For many volunteers and workers, coming home can be harder than going abroad, said Jodi Hammer, a coordinator for returned Peace Corps volunteers.

"You're expecting an exciting new culture and you're almost prepared for it. But when you come

back to your country, you don't expect so much to have changed, and that you've changed," said Hammer. She said it is important to realize that it will be hard to readjust to life at home, just as it was hard to adjust when you left.

According to Hammer and Curtis, everything from language to the simple choice of where to go out can be a struggle at first. "Volunteers learn a different language while they're there, and they develop quite a bit of fluency.

Essay Length	758 words
Difficulty Scale	☆☆☆
Time Suggested	10 minutes
Time Used	

Here, you find yourself not being able to think of the right word," Hammer said.

Share Your Experiences (Carefully)

Anyone who's been abroad, even for a short period of time, knows how hard it can be to keep quiet about your adventures, but you want to be careful not to sound *pretentious* (炫耀的) or affected about your stay abroad.

Every time the word "recycle" is mentioned, no one really wants to hear about the Indian village you taught environmental basics in, but that doesn't mean what you learned overseas isn't important or interesting. In most situations, preventing that *glazed-over* (呆滞的) look comes from knowing when and where your worldly knowledge is wanted.

Hammer said speaking another language for a long time and struggling for the same words in English can cause you to start "talking in what people see as *jargon* (行话), which can even be worse because you're using words they don't understand."

Stay / Get Connected

Your family and friends didn't go abroad with you, so they may not be as pumped as you are to talk about Mozambique or Peru every three minutes. It's a good idea to find others in your same situation.

There are more than 200 000 members in the Peace Corps community, and volunteer groups all over the country promote events to unite people who have common experiences.

The Internet connects large forums of like-minded and travel-oriented people. Join message boards, Facebook groups and online communities to meet others you can talk to about your travels and getting used to life back in the states.

Use Your Resources

Organizations that send volunteers and workers abroad often have programs for participants who have returned.

The Peace Corps' wide network of initiatives includes career development, graduate school support, loan *deferment* (延期) and even one year of noncompetitive eligibility for government employment.

Resources don't just come in the form of programs, either. Returning workers and volunteers are a wealth of information on other cultures, languages and peoples. These can be used to great advantage — whether it's for getting a job or meeting new people.

Accept that You've Changed

Recently returned Peace Corps volunteer Curtis said coming to terms with the effect of her time away made her able to readjust to life at home.

"Once I realized I was never going to go back to being a certain way, it really helped with who I was and how I fit in here."

**Exercises:**

Read the above passage and choose the most appropriate answer to each question from the four choices marked A), B), C) and D).

1. What does Curtis' ice cream choice imply?
 - A) She couldn't find her favorite flavor of ice cream.
 - B) She was in a foreign country as a Peace Corps volunteer.
 - C) She went to a wrong grocery in Lexington.
 - D) She felt it difficult to adjust to life in her own country.
2. According to Jodi Hammer, why do the volunteers find it not easy for them to readjust to life at home?
 - A) They have to face a complete new culture.
 - B) Great changes have taken place in their home country.
 - C) They are not well-prepared for that.
 - D) They find it difficult to learn a new language.
3. How can you avoid the glazed-over look when sharing your experiences abroad?
 - A) Don't mention environmental basics in the conversation.
 - B) Don't talk about anything unimportant or uninteresting.
 - C) Don't mention the experiences when they are undesirable.
 - D) Don't talk in jargon that others don't understand.
4. In order to deal with reverse culture shock, the volunteers may get connected with _____.
 - A) their families and friends
 - B) neighbors in the community
 - C) people having similar experiences
 - D) strangers in Facebook groups
5. Curtis was able to readjust to life in the U.S. because she _____.
 - A) accepted the fact that she had changed
 - B) removed the effect of negative feelings
 - C) realized she would never go abroad again
 - D) went back to the way she used to be

Passage 2 The United States Can Learn from High School Students in India, China

Most Americans have heard that the United States lags China and India in math and science education, but they often dismiss that reality, assuming that the leaders emphasize *rote* (死记硬背) learning at the expense of teaching well-rounded original thinking.

Entrepreneur and venture capitalist Robert Compton says he carried those same assumptions until he traveled to India. There he found high school students as proficient in English literature and geography as they were in calculus. They had clear career plans and approached their goals with a focus he never saw in the United States, even in his own two daughters who were straight A students at an exclusive private school. Realizing that no statistic could do justice to what he had seen on the ground, Compton launched a new career as filmmaker, documenting students' high school curriculums and study habits in India, China and the United States. The result was *2 Million Minutes*, the film Compton screened on May 14 at the Graduate School of Business.

He talked with MBA students about his concerns that the weaknesses in the U.S. school system today could handicap the entire American economy for generations to come, and how students could help bridge the *disparity* (不同). "When Finland was ranked number one in math and science education, I wasn't so worried," said Compton. "But when it's the two largest countries in the world that have fast growing economies and people who are coming out of poverty and driven to achieve, I am worried." Compton cited a calculation from Stanford economist Eric Hanushek that a nation's gross national product growth correlates directly to the level of math and science scores achieved by its students. Despite his own concern, Compton said the best response to this educational disparity is to forge better bonds with India and China.

"We can not keep the brains at a distance," he said. The title, *2 Million Minutes*, represents the approximate number of minutes in a four-year period, to show how different students spend their time. As the film goes back and forth between typical days in the three countries it shows American students attending football games in their high school's brand new \$30 million stadium, while Chinese students display medals won in math competitions. Indian students meet for teacher-led study sessions at 7 a.m. on Saturday mornings while their American counterparts gather at a friend's house to casually study for a test with the television on and *Grey's Anatomy* competing for their attention. While the Americans attend sports, socialize, work in part-time jobs and study, their Chinese and Indian counterparts pretty much study nonstop. And while even

Essay Length	727 words
Difficulty Scale	☆☆☆
Time Suggested	10 minutes
Time Used	

the best American students say they don't feel challenged in schools, the most brilliant in China and India are constantly challenged to learn more. The average U.S. student, his film states, spends 900 hours in a classroom and 1 500 hours in front of the television. And, by the end of high school, Chinese students have spent twice as much time studying as Americans.

The experience led Compton to radically change his own daughters' education incorporating more tutoring and to develop his own math testing system based on what he saw in India to better *parse* (分析) comprehension and identify areas of weakness. But he said that nationwide, this was not a challenge that could be fixed quickly, since it would require a dramatic shift in culture and values. "The fault lies not in our schools but in ourselves," he said. "We are a sports, recreation and leisure country. We need to lift academic and intellectual achievements at least on par with athletic achievements."

As a first step, Compton has already started working with some communities to help them more publicly recognize and reward the best students. He said the United States needs to appreciate how valuable engineers will be in the future, not just to create better software but to rebuild a host of ordinary consumer products like washing machines to make them use water, space or some other resource more efficiently. "To me, this is one of the most exciting times in history to be an engineer," he said. "Everything will have to be reinvented."



Exercises:

Read the above passage and choose the most appropriate answer to each question from the four choices marked A), B), C) and D).

1. When it comes to math and science education, most Americans still maintain _____.
 - A) the U.S. is falling behind China and India
 - B) American leaders emphasize rote learning
 - C) China and India fail to cultivate original thinking
 - D) China and India lay more emphasis on creativity

2. When talking with MBA students, Compton expressed his concerns that _____.
 - A) problems in America's school system were too serious to be solved
 - B) U.S. education might block America's economic development
 - C) Finland's performance in math and science education would threaten U.S. education
 - D) the population in India and China grew too quickly

3. Eric Hanushek pointed out that a nation's gross national product growth _____.
 A) was directly related to its students' math and science level
 B) was calculated by some Stanford economists
 C) was closely related to the educational disparity
 D) was influenced by the relationship with India and China
4. About Indian, Chinese and American students, *2 Million Minutes* mainly reflects _____.
 A) differences in games and competitions
 B) different ways to spend their time
 C) different life styles among them
 D) different attitudes toward the teachers
5. The first step Compton took was to help some communities _____.
 A) publicly recognize the educational problems
 B) seek for people skilled in math and science
 C) appreciate and reward the top students
 D) encourage engineers to create better software

Passage

3

UK Universities Failing to Bridge Culture Gap for Foreign Students

A common *lament* (哀歌) heard at UK universities among staff who come into contact with international students is that the English language tests we use for university admissions do not do their job well enough. The result is that students are "let in" to universities when their English is not up to the level required.

To test this claim it is worth examining how the university admissions system for international students currently works and whether current practices are fit for purpose.

Students who need to demonstrate that they have a level of English language proficiency are usually asked to present results from an international English language exam, such as IELTS, TOEFL and now the Pearson Test of English. Finally, applicants provide additional information via personal statements and letters of recommendation from people qualified to comment on their previous academic or work-related experience.

What this system lacks is any direct method for determining whether or not prospective students' previous experience of educational practice or culture has prepared them for the approaches to study required of students in British universities.

This, in my view, is a serious gap. It is often not language that confounds the international learner in our universities, but a lack of understanding of how things are intended to be done.

There are frequent calls for English language tests to be more specific so as to provide this information, but I have come to the conclusion that it is not the tests that are to blame, but centralised admissions systems that are too focused on tick boxes rather than truly understanding the backgrounds of international students.

Alongside the economic rationale for recruiting international students, universities normally argue that these students diversify the student body and broaden not only their own horizons but also those of home students. But it is precisely this diversity that gets overlooked in the admissions process. The purpose of education and what counts as success in education differ considerably across cultures and countries.

I believe there needs to be a wider conversation in higher education about the differences between educational systems and how to bridge any gaps. It is too much to ask of a three-hour English language screening test to tell us whether applicants have the necessary "know-how" to succeed in a new and different educational environment.

A good start to this conversation was recent joint research at the Lancaster University Management School and the London School of Economics. The research was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and aimed to investigate educational practices in the three countries from which these universities' postgraduate business programmes recruited the highest numbers of international students — China, India and Greece. They found important differences in terms of what it means to be a teacher, attitudes to collaborative study, use of textbooks and libraries, access to research and methods of assuring standards, all of which impact on students' understandings of what it means to be a good student in these various systems.

As research conducted at the University of Bristol has shown, there is plenty of need for this conversation to continue. Bristol's researchers found that universities do recognise that international students are "different". However, unlike at the policy level where diversity is celebrated, at the level

where students are taught and study, difference is often viewed in a far less flattering light.

The researchers found that the discourse surrounding international students was one of students who were more likely to struggle and unlikely to achieve at the highest levels despite their abilities. They note that the qualities of language proficiency, "critical" thinking skills and awareness of academic culture are often merged, so that

Essay Length	835 words
Difficulty Scale	☆☆☆☆☆
Time Suggested	11 minutes
Time Used	

readily visible *infelicities* (不恰当的话语) in language use may be taken as indicators of shortcomings in the other less visible qualities.

This takes me back to my opening point. Too much responsibility is laid at the door of English language proficiency and language tests.

Language proficiency at university is important, but it looms too large in the admissions process and casts too long a shadow over how international students are viewed by academic staff and fellow students.

So is the admissions system fit for purpose? A number of IELTS-funded research studies show that admissions staff responsible for reviewing language proficiency score reports often have little knowledge about the exams themselves. Where admissions have been centralised, it is even less likely that admissions staff will have a good understanding of the interplay between language proficiency, academic qualifications and previous educational culture.

Universities that are serious about the benefits of diversity need to recognise that realising international student potential requires taking greater account of diversity at the point when international students first apply. A good place to learn more about how to do this would be for university policymakers to visit their own English language units and take advantage of the knowledge and expertise that exists among their own staff.



Exercises:

Read the above passage and choose the most appropriate answer to each question from the four choices marked A), B), C) and D).

1. UK university staff often complain that international students _____.
 - A) seldom come into contact with the professors
 - B) do not do their job well enough
 - C) are admitted with an inadequate English level
 - D) do not pass the English language tests

2. The admissions system lacks a direct way to decide whether the international students _____.
 - A) have had quality education in their own countries
 - B) have experienced educational difficulties or culture shock
 - C) have been prepared to adjust to studying in British universities
 - D) have realized the serious gap between different cultures