READING

Student's Book

Don McGovern
INTRODUCING THIS BOOK ............................................. 1

UNIT 1: ACADEMIC SUCCESS ........................................ 11

UNIT 2: COUNSELLING OVERSEAS STUDENTS ..................... 20

UNIT 3: URBAN DEVELOPMENT ....................................... 29

UNIT 4: GLOBAL WARMING ........................................... 41

UNIT 5: EDUCATION IN ASIA .......................................... 54

UNIT 6: INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY ................................. 66

UNIT 7: DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL VALUES IN AFRICA .... 78
Counselling overseas students

In this unit you will read two selections from the same article on problems encountered by overseas students in adapting to academic and cultural life in Britain. You will learn how Western psychological counselling has to change to deal with these problems.

**This unit will give you practice in:**

1. Asking predicting questions about texts.
2. Skimming, scanning and detailed reading.
3. Understanding the main ideas in a text.
4. Applying true/false questions to texts.
5. Guessing unknown vocabulary.
6. Understanding the organisation of texts.
7. Evaluating an individual's degree of certainty in presenting arguments.
8. Understanding the characteristics of a writer's use of language or style.

**Pre-reading tasks**

Text 2.1 is entitled 'Talking their language'. This phrase is often used idiomatically to mean: communicating with people from other groups or cultures in terms which they can understand; having a common understanding.

A. Consider the title and the description of the topic above. Write down three questions that you might expect to be answered by reading this text.

B. Compare your questions with those of a partner and discuss them.
Text 2.1

Task 1

1.1 Skim Text 2.1 quickly.

1.2 What are some of the main ideas?

The rain never stopped, the heating failed, the landlord was racist; I knew no one, my research was handicapped by linguistic misunderstanding and the return flight was overbooked.

These are the sorts of problems that weekly drive overseas students into the surgeries of university counsellors and GPs, with symptoms ranging from headaches and eye strain to heart palpitations. They ask for brain scans and eye tests; worry about tumours and cardiac complaints. Counsellors and doctors mark their files 'stress-related' and attempt counselling.

But often it is in these surgeries – where help should be at hand – that the biggest failures occur. For the psycho-babble of Western therapy, its insistence on finding psychological explanations for physical complaints, can further bewilder the already alienated student.

Mr Alex Coren has been practising as a psychotherapist at King's College, London, for several years. He believes that: 'Psychological theories that take as their starting point the behaviour of individuals are unlikely to have much to offer many overseas students. There is a real danger that we impose our own ethnocentric models on overseas students – many of whom have belief systems and values very different from our own.'

One problem is that students from certain cultures just do not believe in the assumptions underlying the therapist's trade... Likewise, the freedom to pick and choose – and drop out of – courses is viewed by many government-sponsored overseas students, whose jobs and families often depend on their academic success, as dangerous and decadent.

Notes:
1. GPs (line 7) – an abbreviation for General Practitioners, i.e. doctors trained in general medicine without specialising in any one area.
2. palpitations (line 8) – irregular or unusually fast beatings of the heart caused by illness, too much effort, etc.
3. psycho-babble (line 16; informal) – language full of modern slang expressions related to psychology and the awareness of one's own thoughts and feelings.
Task 2

2.1 Re-read Text 2.1 more carefully. This time concentrate on details as well as main ideas.

2.2 Below is a list of the main ideas in the text, in the wrong order. Re-order the ideas so that they follow the pattern of organisation in the text. The first one has been done for you.

| (a) Beliefs and assumptions not shared by overseas students. | Paragraph |
| (b) Problems experienced by overseas students. | 1 |
| (c) Western counselling imposes Western ideas on overseas students. |
| (d) Symptoms resulting from these problems and attempted solutions. |
| (e) The failures of Western counselling. |

Task 3

3.1 Answer T if you think the statement is true and F if you think the statement is false. Correct any false statements so that they express accurately what is in the text.

| (a) The problems experienced by overseas students are caused only by academic study. |
| (b) University counsellors and doctors deal with these problems effectively. |
| (c) Mr Alex Coren has counselled overseas students at Kings College, London, for many years. |
| (d) The terminology of Western counselling always confuses overseas students who are experiencing problems adjusting to British culture. |
| (e) Mr Coren does not agree with most Western psychological theories. |
| (f) Many government-sponsored overseas students regard the freedom to choose and change academic courses as dangerous. |


Task 4

4.1 Below are some words taken from the text. Try to guess their meaning by thinking about the context in which they are found. In each case choose one of the three answers which you think best expresses the meaning.

   1. stress-related (line 11)
      (a) connected with another department;
      (b) related to the pressure caused by problems with living, working, etc.;
      (c) requiring serious medical treatment.

   2. bewilder (line 16)
      (a) to reassure; to give a sense of security;
      (b) to amuse intensely;
      (c) to confuse, especially by the presence of many different things.

   3. alienated (line 16)
      (a) made to feel isolated or separated from something; made to feel friendless;
      (b) having a secure sense of belonging to something;
      (c) made to know exactly what to expect.

   4. ethnocentric (line 22)
      (a) highly developed;
      (b) experimental and not yet fully accepted;
      (c) believing that one's own race, nation or group is better than others.

   5. decadent (line 31)
      (a) in a state of decline or moral decay;
      (b) specific to only one culture;
      (c) involving high risk but potentially rewarding.

4.2 Match each of the following words with its synonym in the vocabulary items above:

   deteriorating      perplex      estranged      nationalist      psychosomatic

Task 5

5.1 In which paragraph does the writer quote or cite someone else's point of view?

5.2 Explain this argument or point of view in your own words.

5.3 For what two reasons is the writer worth taking seriously? In other words, why are his/her views likely to be authoritative?
5.4 Find in the text at least two examples of beliefs or values held by counsellors which are not usually shared by overseas students.

**Task 6**

6.1 In lines 17–24, which word does the writer use to introduce the speaker’s opinion or point of view to the reader? How much certainty is expressed in this word?

6.2 Can you think of words similar to this which could be used in academic writing? How much certainty does each one express? Write them down in order of degree of certainty.

6.3 Which word expresses the degree of probability in the speaker’s view? How much certainty does this word imply?

6.4 Can you think of words similar to this which could be used in academic writing? Write them down in order of probability. (Refer again to the work you did in Unit 1, Task 4.)

**Task 7**

7.1 Who seems to be speaking in paragraph 1?

7.2 Why do you think the writer chose to begin the article in this way?

**Text 2.2**

**Task 8**

8.1 Scan the text quickly for the following information:
   
   (a) To what audience was Mr Coren speaking?
   
   (b) From what parts of the world were the two students who received counselling from him?
Mr Coren has counselled students from cultures in which feelings such as fear and loneliness are not viewed as part of an individual's make-up – but are associated with 'supernatural spirits and ghosts'.

'Values I hold as obvious - the right to happiness, autonomy, freedom - are not shared by all overseas students. The world of feelings is linked to spirits, outside presences, not linked to oneself,' he said.

Thus solutions designed to maximise the possibility of achieving happiness and autonomy may be quite inappropriate.

His message, to a gathering of university and polytechnic student counsellors, was simple. Before suggesting that the headaches and double vision of the overseas student are something to do with worry about work, family absence or racial harassment, counsellors should first try to understand the students' cultural idiom. 'The societies which send overseas students must be studied and understood if counselling is to be effective,' he said.

Mr Coren told the annual conference of the Association of Student Counsellors that he had reached his conclusions after several cases resisted his psychological approach.

Mr Coren treated an American student on a Rhodes scholarship to London who had previously been seen, at home, by a witch doctor.

Another student, Mohammed F, a 30-year-old post-graduate student from the Middle East, left his post as a university academic as well as his wife and two small children to study for a doctorate in Britain. He was referred to Mr Coren by the university doctor after complaining of double vision and headaches.

Mohammed thought he might have a brain tumour and requested a scan. Mr Coren suggested there was a psychological dimension. 'Could the headaches be the result of stress?' Mohammed was startled and upset. A subsequent appointment with Mr Coren was not kept.

'The counsellor's role should perhaps be as an intermediary between the old and new cultures,' said Mr Coren.
Task 9

9.1 Re-read Text 2.2 more carefully.

9.2 What are the main ideas?

Task 10

10.1 Below are some words taken from the text. Try to guess their meaning by thinking about the context in which they are found. In each case choose one of the three answers which you think best expresses the meaning.

1. *make-up* (line 34)
   (a) powder, colour, etc., worn on the face to improve appearance;
   (b) a combination of qualities in a person’s character;
   (c) one’s physical body and its component systems.

2. *autonomy* (line 41)
   (a) the right to manage one’s own affairs;
   (b) the state of being free from moral considerations;
   (c) the condition of being wholly dependent on others.

3. *harassment* (line 47)
   (a) a gradual process of integration;
   (b) act of causing worry or unhappiness by creating trouble;
   (c) severe confusion.

4. *idiom* (line 49)
   (a) a set of features which are common to many groups;
   (b) conflict;
   (c) the ways of expression typical of a particular group.

5. *intermediary* (lines 70–71)
   (a) a person who serves to disguise or conceal the differences between two things;
   (b) a person who tries to prevent exchange;
   (c) a person who brings two persons, groups or systems into agreement.

10.2 Match each of the following words with its synonym in the vocabulary items above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dialect</th>
<th>independence</th>
<th>aggravation</th>
<th>personality</th>
<th>go-between</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

26
**Task 11**

11.1 In Mr Coren’s view, how can the failures of Western counselling be overcome (lines 32–51)?

11.2 How did he come to these conclusions?

**Task 12**

12.1 Which word emphasises Mr Coren’s degree of certainty about the views expressed in lines 32–51? How much certainty is expressed?

12.2 Which words express Mr Coren’s degree of certainty in his concluding remarks to the conference? How much certainty is expressed?

**Task 13**

13.1 How would you describe the writer’s use of language in Texts 2.1 and 2.2? Is it formal or informal? Personal or impersonal? Would you describe these texts as academic writing?

13.2 Who are the readers for whom these texts were probably written?

13.3 Where would you expect texts like these to be published?

**Task 14**

14.1 Does the title ‘Talking their language’ give specific information about the main ideas in this article?

14.2 Write a suitable sub-title to give the reader further information.

**Task 15**

15.1 How many of your predicting or pre-reading questions have been answered by reading these texts?
**Task 16**

16.1 Do you agree with Mr Coren’s conclusions in lines 70-2? Can a counsellor from one culture effectively help someone from another culture? Discuss.

16.2 Is Western psychological counselling practised in your culture, either in academic or non-academic contexts? How effective is it? What are some of the opinions of it in your country? Discuss.

16.3 What are the alternatives to Western counselling in your country? To whom do people go if they need to talk about problems? Discuss.

**Task 17**

17.1 Write an essay on the following topic:

```
Can a counsellor from one culture effectively help someone from another culture?
Why/why not? What are the factors involved in this question?
```

Is a counsellor likely to be effective, for example, if he or she has visited the student’s country or studied the student’s language before being approached for help? What qualities in the counsellor’s personality are helpful in effective counselling?

You may wish to include information from the reading texts in your essay. You may also want to refer to other reading texts which you have found relating to this topic.