



Engaging with Text: Strategies for Critical Reading in TESOL Assignments

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APA Citation:

Renandya, W.A., Nguyen, M.T.T., & Jacobs, G.M. (2024). Engaging with text: Strategies for critical reading in TESOL assignments. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 17(2), pp. 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.70730/KEUF7223>

Received
25/04/2024

Received in revised
form
25/05/2024

Accepted
0/06/2024

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to assist TESOL learners in effectively delving into professional literature for both their coursework and future teaching endeavors. It begins by addressing common challenges in critical reading faced by TESOL students, such as complex and technical language, varied writing styles and a lack of familiarity with TESOL theories and contexts. It then offers practical guidelines to help students identify and analyze relevant literature, evaluate evidence and claims, and apply theories in practical classroom contexts. Serving as a practical resource, this article is intended for students seeking to enhance their critical reading skills in TESOL.

Keywords: Critical reading, search skills, TESOL assignments, thinking skills

Introduction

For learners in TESOL programs, writing well-balanced TESOL assignments can be a rather daunting task. This is true for experienced as well as less experienced TESOL practitioners who are enrolled in diploma or graduate TESOL programs. For the more experienced practitioners, they may rely too heavily on their own unique teaching experiences when writing their assignments, ignoring the fact that their experience may work in their teaching contexts but not in other situations. In addition, they may not be fully aware of recent theoretical discussions that reflect the field's current, but evolving, understandings of best practices.

For the less experienced TESOL students, the challenges are significantly greater. For one, they have minimal or no prior teaching experiences; therefore, there is not much they can draw upon. In other words, they will essentially have to begin anew and immerse themselves extensively in the professional literature. Given the rather long history of TESOL and the numerous theoretical concepts and practical ideas that define the field, the task of familiarizing themselves with such a vast knowledge base and then applying it to various contexts can be overwhelming. What this means is that they will have to engage in a considerable volume of reading and reflection to integrate historical and contemporary thoughts and practices with their own outlooks.

Reading academic texts in TESOL, therefore, can pose significant challenges for those less familiar with the subject, due to the technical language and complex concepts involved. Terms such as task-based language teaching, input/output hypothesis, and pragmatic competence are not easy to comprehend because they have specialized meanings. For example, to fully grasp the concept of a task in task-based language teaching, students will need to read N.S. Prahbu's (1987) seminal work, which was subsequently expanded upon by other TESOL scholars such as Michael Long (2016) and Rod Ellis (2017), not to mention the numerous refinements and elaborations of the concept by other scholars. González-Lloret (2015), for example, discussed how various technological tools can be integrated into task-based language teaching methodology.

Discussed below are some of the difficulties that our typical TESOL students encounter when reading the TESOL literature.

Linguistic Complexity

While some TESOL scholars employ a conversational style and use less formal language, a considerable number write in formal language and utilize complex and intricate linguistic structures. For example, Norman Fairclough, a leading figure in critical discourse analysis, is known to use

highly complex language when discussing the link between sociolinguistic theories, linguistic analysis, and critical social theories (e.g., Fairclough, 2013). Readers who are not accustomed to such language use may struggle to grasp the contents. Without a basic comprehension of the text, a deeper analysis and critical examination of its contents becomes unattainable.

Technical Vocabulary

Academic texts in TESOL often use specialized vocabulary related to linguistics, language acquisition, language pedagogy, and assessment. This can be rather overwhelming for students unfamiliar with these terms. To understand them, students may need to consult specialized dictionaries or other texts such as the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* compiled by Richards and Schmidt (2013), the *Cambridge Dictionary of Linguistics* by Miller and Brown (2013), or the *Key Terms in Second Language Acquisition* by VanPatten and Benati (2010).

Variability in Writing Styles

Different writers have distinct styles of writing depending on the purpose and audience of their writing. Scholars who publish in high impact journals, such as *System* and *TESOL Quarterly*, for example, often write in highly academic style due to the specialized nature of these journals. Those who publish in the more practice-oriented journals, such as *Modern English Teacher* or *English Teaching Forum*, tend to use a less formal and more accessible style of writing. The authors of the current article, for example, prefer a less formal writing style. In part this means refraining from using too much technical jargon, and when jargon is used, it is immediately explained. This way, the majority of our target readers, mostly TESOL practitioners, can more easily comprehend our content. We are well aware that complex ideas presented in complex language does not align with our goal of sharing knowledge with our intended readers in order to invite students to become more active participants in the community of TESOL practitioners.

Complex Theories and Concepts

TESOL literature frequently explores complicated theories and concepts linked to second/foreign language learning, cognitive and affective processes, and sociocultural issues. After all, language acquisition is a complicated phenomenon impacted by a dizzying array of ever-evolving factors. Additionally, a good number of these concepts may share similar but theoretically distinct characteristics, making them harder to grasp. A good example is translanguaging, which for many TESOL practitioners is

synonymous with related concepts such as code-switching or code-mixing (e.g., see Renandya & Chang, 2022 for a discussion of translanguaging in EFL contexts). Readers who lack prior knowledge or experience in the topic may fail to grasp these complex notions.

Unfamiliarity with TESOL Contexts

TESOL contexts are far from being uniform. For example, the teaching of English in the U.S. or the U.K. is radically different from how it is taught in Japan, Korea, and Thailand. TESOL in the former two countries is often referred to as taking place in ESL contexts where students learn the language for immediate use and live in a society where English is the main language used or one of the main languages. Additionally, in these contexts, the learning of English as an Additional Language helps bilingual children who grow up in non-English speaking homes acquire academic knowledge taught at schools.

On the other hand, TESOL in the latter three countries is often referred to as taking place in EFL contexts where students learn the language as a school subject with little opportunity to actually use the language outside of class for communicative purposes. Nevertheless, as English is increasingly becoming a tool for international communication among speakers of various linguacultural backgrounds in these contexts, it is essential that the teaching of English also prepare students for those intercultural encounters. Students' purposes for learning English are also important to consider in both ESL or EFL contexts. In both settings, there are students who learn English for future English-medium university studies. That being the case, the materials, methods, and assessment types used in these two contexts may be vastly different.

Guidelines for completing TESOL assignments

The purpose of this article is to provide a set of practical guidelines on how TESOL students can read the professional literature more efficiently and critically in order to use what they glean from the literature in their course assignments and their future careers. They need to identify relevant and reliable academic books, journal articles, websites, podcasts, etc., read them carefully and critically, apply, analyze, and synthesize the readings and pick some of the most relevant ideas to support the arguments they present in their assignments. In the next section, we offer a set of guidelines that we find useful in our teaching and writing.

Reading critically to complete a TESOL assignment involves a focused approach in which students analyze, evaluate, and engage with the literature in ways that support their assignment goals and their longer-term

development as life-long learners and educators. We present below a set of guidelines that we have used in our teaching to help our students read more critically in preparation for completing their assignments.

Understand the Assignment

The first step to successfully completing a TESOL assignment is to read and understand the nature of the assignment. What is the topic or question that needs to be addressed? What specific aspects of TESOL need to be explored to meet the requirements of the assignment? What actions are students expected to take with the topic? For instance, are they to discuss, explain, or critically analyse the issue? While “discuss” often involves considering various ideas related to a topic without taking a stand, “critically analyse” requires students to critique the ideas with opinions. A good understanding of the nature and scope of the assignment will guide students’ reading effort. Here is an example of a fairly typical assignment: Critical analysis of a TESOL coursebook.

Choose a popular English language coursebook that you are familiar with (e.g., Headway or Interchange). Examine the coursebook using a set of language teaching principles covered in your TESOL course. Your assignment should include (i) a brief introduction about the coursebook (e.g., who it is intended for, what are the key features of the coursebook, how it is to be used, etc.), (ii) a discussion of and reason for choosing the principles that you will be using to analyze the coursebooks, (iii) a presentation of your critical analysis, (iv) your recommendations for adapting the coursebook for a particular set of students, and (v) 10-15 current and relevant references. The length of your assignment should be about 3,500 words.

To adequately address points ii, iii, and iv, students must not only review pertinent course readings addressing language teaching principles but also locate additional materials not covered in the course. This means that they will need to find recent and relevant literature that explores the functions of coursebooks and the theoretical principles that underpin useful coursebooks, (See for example, Macalister, 2016; Vitta, 2021). By integrating and synthesizing information gathered from course readings and other relevant sources, by reflecting on their own experiences as teachers and learners, and by employing sound reasoning skills, students might just be able to present a more well-rounded and balanced analysis of the coursebook.

Find Relevant Literature

As mentioned above, students need to make good use of relevant materials from the course readings and also gather relevant materials from the literature, which could include TESOL academic books (e.g., *ELTD Series* by TESOL Press), academic journal articles (e.g., those published by the *ELT Journal* and *TESOL Journal*), practice-oriented articles (e.g., those published by the *Modern English Teacher* and *Humanizing Language Teaching*).

However, finding relevant readings from the literature is by no means easy. TESOL students may not know where and how to search for these materials. If they study in a well-resourced university with a well-stocked library and online subscriptions to a wide array of journals and databases (e.g., *EBSCOhost*, *ProQuest*, *JSTOR*), the process may be less daunting but is still very time-consuming if they may not know what they are looking for. Fortunately, technology can make the process less complicated and less time-consuming. Students can search for relevant readings by keying in appropriate keywords in Google Scholar to get an initial list of readings. For example, keywords for the coursebook assignment above could include *TESOL coursebook evaluation*, *coursebook evaluation checklist*, and *principles and practices for evaluating TESOL coursebooks*. The initial list can be refined by using Google Scholar's date range filtering function. Choosing a time range of 'since 2019,' for example, will generate a list of readings published in the past 5 years. This is just an example of the need for students to familiarize themselves with the expanding variety of available search tools. Librarians can be helpful here. Also, for those learners and educators without easy access to reference materials, there are some academic reference websites which they might find beneficial to explore (see Barok et al., 2015).

A faster way of generating a relevant list of readings is to make use of AI-powered tools. *Elicit*, an AI Research Assistant (<https://elicit.com/>), is one such tool that can generate a list of relevant literature without requiring perfect keyword matching. It can also summarize and extract key research findings in seconds. To use this tool, students first need to sign up for an account. *Elicit* is currently free of charge, but the paid plan has more features than the basic free plan. After logging in, they can begin their search by entering relevant keywords, or a specific research question into the query box (e.g., *second language pragmatics*, or *what are the effects of instruction on second language pragmatic competence?*). *Elicit* will then search through a database of over 200 million academic papers using a semantic search, which does not necessitate exact keyword matching to generate germane papers.

The search results include not only references related to the query but also a brief summary specific to the query for each reference. Students can further narrow down this preliminary list by filtering the papers according to publication dates (e.g., from 2010 to 2024), study types (e.g., systematic

review, meta-analysis, randomized control trial, longitudinal, etc.), or the availability of a pdf copy of the paper. They can also enhance the preciseness of the search by adjusting the keywords that the papers must or must not contain. Another useful feature of *Elicit* is its ability to create a matrix of specific information from each paper, or generate common concepts across papers on the same topic (e.g., *the operationalization of pragmatic competence in second language pragmatics studies*). This can serve as a starting point for writing the literature review section of assignments. When extracting information, students can either choose from a list of predefined queries (e.g., *study design, duration, main findings*), or create their own queries (e.g., *what target language is examined? What is the instructional context? How is pragmatics learning outcome measured?*).

Although *Elicit* can save a significant amount of time in finding and summarizing literature, it is important that students use it with caution. Researchers have warned about the potential lack of accuracy of the extracted information and recommend that users always verify the returned results. It is also recommended that users carefully check the quality of the generated references, because like any other AI tool, *Elicit* cannot evaluate this aspect but can only provide limited information such as citation counts. Finally, it is crucial that students search for various perspectives on the topic to reduce the risk of confirmation bias, a tendency to use only sources and information that match people's current beliefs (Byun & Stuhlmüller, 2022).

Include Authoritative Sources

A huge body of TESOL literature deals with a wide range of topics. This range becomes even wider as so many disciplines, e.g., sociology, economics, and biology, have very useful insights as to what impacts TESOL learners, teachers, and other stakeholders. This very extensive body of work has been contributed to by a diverse group of experienced as well as less experienced individuals, including TESOL educators, TESOL specialists, TESOL researchers, materials writers, curriculum developers, graduate students, and practitioners from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The quality of these publications also vary greatly. While it is commonly assumed that publications in high-impact journals generally have higher quality due to their more rigorous peer review process and lower acceptance rates compared to low-impact journals, this assumption may not hold true for individual papers.

However, for the purpose of completing a TESOL assignment, students will be well advised to include literature from authoritative sources (e.g., *Language Teaching*, *TESOL Journal*, *ELT Journal*, and TESOL books published by mainstream publishers such as *Cambridge University Press* and *Routledge*). In contrast, sources such as blogposts, *Wikipedia*, or conference

presentations – sometimes lacking the rigor of peer review – should usually be avoided. *Google Chrome* now includes a feature called “Rapid journal quality check”, allowing students to easily assess the quality of a source when searching on *Google Scholar*. Students will also benefit from work by prominent scholars (e.g., Rod Ellis, Brian Tomlinson, Jack Richards, Diane Larsen-Freeman, and Jeremy Harmer). These key figures have significantly shaped the discourse of TESOL education through their influential publications. By incorporating the opinions of leading scholars into their assignments, students can feel confident that their ideas and opinions are well-aligned with widely accepted views in the field.

Brian Tomlinson, for example, is one of the most prominent figures in the area of materials development and evaluation and has published extensively in this field. His books (e.g., Tomlinson, 2011), often grounded in SLA theories and practical classroom applications, offer a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of language teaching materials. Incorporating his perspectives into the coursebook evaluation assignment referred to above provides students with a set of principled criteria for assessing the quality and suitability of a TESOL coursebook.

We are not, however, suggesting that students should unquestionably endorse Brian Tomlinson’s or anyone else’s theories and principles of materials evaluation or of anything else. Indeed, students should read his works with a critical eye and point out some of what they see as the weaknesses or limitations of his ideas. They could do this by drawing upon their own learning/teaching experiences or referencing alternative viewpoints from other (perhaps less prominent) TESOL scholars (e.g., Xu, 2013) especially those working from different perspectives and contexts.

Before concluding this section, it is important to address one final point. While a small number of students might be familiar with some key figures in TESOL, the majority may lack this awareness and need help in identifying prominent TESOL scholars. Students have at least a few options to consider here. Firstly, they could approach their TESOL instructors and seek their help in identifying well-known scholars in specific domains (e.g., Richard Day for extensive reading; Ken Hyland for second language writing; Ofelia García for translanguaging; Naoko Taguchi for second language pragmatics). Secondly, they can leverage on the powerful tool of *Google Scholar* to identify leading figures in a specific area within TESOL. A targeted search by entering a relevant keyword, such as ‘second language writing’, for example, will yield a list of highly-cited publications. For instance, among the most prominent scholars in second language writing is Ken Hyland whose publications occupy the top positions in the search results. His 2019 book *Second Language Writing*, published by *Cambridge University Press*, is one of his most referenced books, which has generated some 5,000 citations. Journals such as *Language Teaching* (*Cambridge University Press*), which publishes expert

overviews and critical survey articles of the field, can also serve as good entry points for gaining insights into key trends and issues in various TESOL topics.

When choosing which literature to cite, some students stay away from any work more than 10 years old. This is an understandable yet controversial practice, as some lecturers ban references beyond a given date. However, older works can be useful for at least two reasons. First, sometimes these are seminal works upon which many later works are based. It is important to go back to the original source, because later users of ideas may have distorted them. Second, sometimes older works may be the only ones related to a particular viewpoint. Perhaps, the pendulum has swung away from a given perspective. Who knows? Maybe it will swing back, and that viewpoint from the previous century will again become popular.

Understand the Material

While AI-generated texts can serve as a helpful initial screening tool to assess the relevance of the literature, it is crucial not to depend solely on such texts. They may not fully capture the contextual intricacies of the research; therefore, careful reading of complete articles is recommended to facilitate a more nuanced understanding. Furthermore, short cuts are great in the short run but deprive students of the learning to be gained via taking the longer, more arduous yet more sure route.

Indeed, without a solid grasp of the literature, the subsequent tasks of analyzing and evaluating the authors' arguments become significantly more difficult. A good understanding of the literature forms the basis of scholarly discussions, enabling a critical assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, and applications of the arguments. Furthermore, a thorough understanding of diverse viewpoints and alternate interpretations is required for a well-rounded analysis and critical appraisal of the writers' arguments. For example, a summary of a research study on translanguaging pedagogy may simply state that it has a positive impact on language learning. But what does positive impact actually mean? Without comprehending the full scope of the research, it is not easy to determine whether the positive impact refers to improved language proficiency, more favorable attitudes towards language learning, or ease in using multiple linguistic repertoires in the classroom. Additionally, Krashen (e.g., Renandya et al., 2018) pointed out that large quantities of narrow reading, i.e., reading focused on a particular genre and topic, improves vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension.

Appreciate the Context

TESOL is a dynamic and diverse field which encompasses a wide range of contexts, learners, and objectives. It is not a monolithic entity, but a complex discipline with distinct variations that can significantly influence the effectiveness of the teaching methodologies. What works in one context with a particular group of students might not necessarily yield the same results in another, due to the numerous factors that impact language acquisition.

An illustrative example of the contextual nature of teaching methodologies is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Initially designed for ESL students, CLT emphasizes the immediate practical use of English. However, when applied to EFL contexts, where students often learn primarily for examination purposes rather than for genuine communication in and beyond the classroom, the effectiveness of CLT appears to be reduced. This does not imply that CLT is entirely ineffective in EFL settings; rather, it suggests that the approach may require substantial modification to align with the specific requirements of various EFL environments.

In addition to the broader context above, one needs to be mindful of micro-level contexts that can impact language learning. Micro-level contexts, such as the age of the students, their levels of proficiency, class size, language learning objectives, student motivation, whether the class is face-to-face (or online or blended), teacher professionalism, and availability of learning resources, can influence the quality of language learning. TESOL students can make informed decisions about incorporating a research report or a practice-oriented article into their assignments by gaining a deeper understanding of the contextual relevance of the material. This awareness enables them to assess whether the content of the article aligns well with and supports the arguments they present in their assignments. At the same time, as discussed earlier regarding confirmation bias, it can also be useful to include differing opinions in assignments.

Analyze the Authors' Argument

Understanding authors' main argument is a crucial aspect of critical reading. What is the central message that the authors are attempting to support? Is the key message presented in an objective manner? To determine whether the key points of the text are conveyed objectively, the authors' language, tone, and general writing structure must be critically examined. Objective writing is often written in neutral language that is largely free of emotional bias or unsubstantiated personal ideas. The tone is important, with an objective tone characterized by impartiality. An examination of the whole structure of the text, i.e., how information is organized and, more specifically,

how information is arranged reveals the level of objectivity of the authors' argument. A well-structured presentation facilitates the exploration of diverse points of view, resulting in more objective and balanced arguments.

It is also of crucial importance to scrutinize the evidence presented in support of the argument. Evidence comes in many different forms: statistical data, case histories, ethnographic studies, expert quotations, personal observations, and experiences. The type of evidence used by the authors will need to be carefully examined and evaluated to determine the validity and soundness of the argument. For example, when presented with a study which found that a specific vocabulary teaching method was generally effective when applied to fifteen EFL learners, as critical readers, students might want to probe further: Does a study involving just fifteen learners provide enough data to support the authors' conclusion? How was the teaching implemented? Were the learners screened for pre-existing knowledge of the target vocabulary items? How were learning outcomes measured? What does "generally effective" mean? Were there any learners who did not improve, and if so, can we still say the method was effective? Was the effect size (i.e., a statistical measure of the size of the relationship between variables, e.g., in this case, the relationship between the teaching method [the independent variable] used in the study and the learners' gains in vocabulary knowledge [the dependent variable]) large enough to be considered meaningful and to recommend the method?

The purpose of students asking these questions is to assess the extent to which authors have provided adequate justification for the claims they make. While we do not assume that authors are intentionally misleading readers, that does not mean we unquestionably accept everything as valid evidence. Since TESOL programs may emphasize different types of evidence, it is a good idea for students to discuss with their instructors which types of evidence hold greater importance in their particular program.

Reflect on Application

The ability to draw connections between theory and practice is another important aspect of critical reading. As students engage with professional literature, they must consider how the ideas in the source can be applied to TESOL practice. For example, how might the concepts, such as pragmatics and intercultural competence, discussed in the professional literature impact classroom teaching, language acquisition, materials use, or language assessment? What precautions need to be considered when applying these ideas in the classroom? For example, current second language pragmatics research suggests moving beyond imposing native speaker pragmatic norms to equip learners with strategies and skills for navigating pragmatic variations and managing interactions in intercultural settings.

However, it is essential to note that these suggestions may be more suitable for advanced learners who already possess sufficient linguistic resources. Low-level learners, constrained by their limited linguistic competence, may benefit more from assistance in recognising intended meanings by speakers of various linguacultural backgrounds before attempting production in these contexts.

Furthermore, empirical studies often provide ideas that are more theoretical than practical. Consider, for example, research studies on Written Corrective Feedback (WCF). Although such studies yield valuable insights into the intricacies of language acquisition and pedagogy, classroom applications often require thoughtful adjustments to align with the practical realities of teaching. Important factors to consider include not only the specific learning target of the lesson and learners' proficiency, ages, and metalinguistic awareness, but also teachers' own beliefs, experiences, and timetables.

It is also essential to explore how theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature can be applied to create instructional materials for diverse language learning environments. Take task-based teaching as an example. Despite receiving support in the second language acquisition research, task-based teaching is not universally applicable and comes with certain challenges. While some teachers may have autonomy to design their own materials and teaching, others may need to follow a prescribed grammar-based syllabus or textbook, leaving them little leeway to structure lessons around tasks. Fortunately, even in constrained situations, possibilities exist. For instance, teachers can create tasks as a means for practising predetermined language features. Another option is to modify grammar-based textbook activities into pedagogic tasks to encourage more meaningful interaction (see, for example, Bui & Newton, 2020). These ideas involve not only critical understanding of academic literature but also its practical application for effective language teaching in different educational contexts.

Leverage on Peer Collaboration

Most assignments in TESOL programs are single-authored. However, just because only one student's name appears on the assignment's title page should not stop students from discussing what they read as they prepare the assignment. Indeed, such discussions can provoke critical thinking, as students share and debate, bringing to bear their various opinions, learning/teaching experiences, other readings, and understandings of what the assignment requires. Sometimes, a critical reflection assignment may explicitly require students to incorporate insights not only from course readings and lectures but also from group discussions to foster an understanding of diverse perspectives, active learning, and engagement. Are

such discussions cheating/plagiarism? They can turn into that, but academically rigorous ways exist to harvest the benefits of peer collaboration. First, after discussing, each student should write from their own perspective, with peer discussion assisting students to develop and refine that perspective. Second, thinking assignments are not MCQ quizzes that have only one right answer, with students attempting to memorize their peers' answers. Third, teaching, as with so much else in life, is a dish best prepared and enjoyed together. Thus, TESOL programs should encourage students to deploy and strengthen their collaborative muscles to derive cognitive and affective benefits throughout their careers.

Read and Re-read Your Draft Assignment

Reading and writing go together. Students should not read, read, read, and then write only after finishing a great deal of reading. Instead, a more effective strategy may be to combine reading and writing, even writing initial ideas before beginning to read the literature. Another way to combine writing with reading can be by annotating texts while reading or by taking notes. What ideas do the readings spark? Any reflections that might be useful in the assignment? Some people keep a notebook or device at the ready (even next to their bed) should a brainstorm send them a thunderously good idea. When revising drafts, a similar process can take place. Writing and then rereading one's writing can provide a still space to think critically. Thus, when writing, students should, to the extent possible, delay concern about organization and mechanics, and focus solely on ideas until the ideas seem ready for inspection by the students' (and perhaps their peers') proofreading eyes.

Critically “Read” the Instructors

There was a time when assessment in TESOL programs was based largely on objective exams, filled with close-ended, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and MCQ items. Although essay-type assignments are now probably the dominant assessment mode in TESOL programs, students should recognize the continuity that exists between the past and present. In other words, instructors are still testing knowledge, just in a different way. Thus, what looks like an open-ended essay is, in some ways, just an old-fashioned test in disguise.

What do instructors want to see in students' papers? This is where the reading comes in. In addition to reading the assignment instructions, students also need to “read” what instructors have been saying and doing during the term. This can be ideological, e.g., do they emphasize social factors in learning or psychological factors? Do they have pet peeves, such as not using the word “ensure,” e.g., “cooperative learning ensures more peer interaction,” because

nothing is certain. Also, students should ask for sample assignments and scoring rubrics. Students can have a voice in questioning whether the instructions, samples, and rubrics are clear and whether the assignments align with the course content and students' future needs.

Conclusion

Reading academic texts in TESOL can be challenging, especially for those students less familiar with the domain, due to the technical language and complex concepts involved. In this article, we have explored some of these challenges and provided practical guidelines on how students can read the professional literature more efficiently and critically. We emphasize a focused approach that encourages students to analyze, evaluate, and engage with the literature to support not only their assignment goals but also their longer-term development as life-long learners and educators. These tips are offered to assist students not only in the present but also as they continue their journey of learning and teaching in the long run. Furthermore, the guidance in this article is useful in all areas of people's lives, for example, in their role as global citizens.

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