

# *A Study of the Teaching Mode of EAP Reading Based on Online Databases*

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**Abstract:** Drawing on OBE, this study constructs a teaching mode of EAP (English for Academic Purpose) reading based on online databases, and applies the mode in teaching practice. The results show that compared to traditional teaching method, this model is more popular among students. With the help of online databases, this teaching mode of EAP reading integrates the acquisition of the English language knowledge with the learning of professional knowledge, fosters the students' critical thinking, and therefore significantly enhances students' EAP reading ability.

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, with the proposal of "the Belt and Road" and other relevant policies, academic knowledge exchange and sharing among countries has become more frequent. Building the theory of China's subjectivity and originality from an international perspective has also become a hot topic. In terms of academic research, a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of research trends and academic frontiers can only be achieved by reading a large number of EAP articles. In the information age, it is of great significance to leverage online learning resources such as academic journal databases and digital book databases to improve students' EAP level, cultivate their EAP reading ability, and enhance their critical thinking skills [1]. Only with these excellent abilities can students consult English literature, write English academic papers, and engage in academic exchanges with foreigners. Guided by OBE (Output Based Education), this study starts from the actual teaching situation of EAP reading in Chinese universities, summarizes the research results of teaching modes of EAP reading at home and abroad, and explores how to utilize online learning resources, particularly online foreign journal databases, to cultivate the EAP reading ability of university students.

## **2. A literature review of EAP reading research**

According to the research topic, a literature review was conducted on the CNKI database using the keyword "EAP Reading." A total of 132 search results were obtained, including 117 academic journals and 15 master's and doctoral papers. Currently, research on EAP reading, both at home and abroad, can be roughly divided into three categories: the first category is the study of EAP reading strategies, which aims at improving EAP reading ability. For example, William Baker found that

cognition and compensation were the most commonly used strategies in EAP reading and writing [2]. The second category is the research on the teaching mode and evaluation status of EAP reading, providing reference and inspiration for EAP teaching. Li Renfang proposed that academic reading is an important way for students to expand their knowledge, accumulate academic knowledge, and improve their academic theoretical literacy. The third category is the research on the transfer of EAP reading and writing abilities, which comprehensively cultivates academic research abilities. Among them, Negretti and Kuteeva studied the transfer of interdisciplinary learning abilities, specifically the learners' awareness of integrating metacognitive themes in EAP reading and writing, providing new theoretical insights and practical directions [3].

Additionally, in terms of current research on academic reading, domestic and foreign scholars have different research focuses. Domestic scholars tend to conduct comprehensive surveys on the overall reading behavior of research subjects, while foreign scholars tend to focus on exploring individual reading behaviors of research subjects [4].

From the research directions and achievements both domestically and internationally, it is evident that important research results have been achieved in EAP reading, with diverse research methods and objects. However, the research content still needs to be further enriched, and more theoretical exploration and empirical research are needed in the field of EAP reading teaching in order to comprehensively enhance the teaching of EAP reading.

### **3. The current situation of EAP reading for university students**

The author of this article has been engaged in teaching EAP reading in universities for a long time, and through teaching practice, she has found several difficulties in students' EAP reading.

(1) The lack of autonomy in academic reading: The main purpose of academic reading among the vast majority of students is to complete the learning tasks assigned by the teacher. Therefore, students seldom have a thorough understanding of the content of academic reading. Students' enthusiasm for academic reading is not high, and they have not yet formed autonomous and spontaneous learning habits. Mainly relying on external motivation to study EAP reading, students lack critical thinking and innovative questioning abilities.

(2) Limited academic reading resources for students: Due to students' lack of initiative in EAP reading, their reading materials are mostly limited to textbooks and materials provided by teachers. However, there are various channels available to access academic reading information, such as online databases, college databases, libraries, and other sources. Currently, both on and off-campus resources are not fully utilized.

(3) The lack of awareness in time planning for EAP reading: Through teaching practice, we have found that students significantly lack investment in academic reading time, with most students reading no more than 5 hours per week. The main reason for this situation is that students do not plan their time well for EAP reading.

(4) The lack of systematization in students' academic reading materials [5]: According to teaching practice, due to the high difficulty of academic reading and limited teaching time, students often read short but timely academic reading materials. However, this leads to a lack of systematization in academic reading. Students are accustomed to understanding the superficial meaning of information without engaging in critical thinking.

Based on the above four aspects, as well as the fact that EAP reading ability and academic information literacy have not yet been considered as assessment criteria for students' academic abilities, EAP reading teaching is not effective in universities.

#### 4. Introduction to online Journal Databases

The online database refers to an electronic journal database, which is a full-text database collected and published by a database integrator according to disciplines. Currently, online journal databases are the primary means for universities to provide students with full-text retrieval services for foreign electronic journals. Full-text databases such as Science Direct, Springer Link, and ACS are published by world-renowned publishers and include world-famous high-level academic journals. These databases provide rich materials for EAP reading practice and teaching.

The Science Direct database is published by Elsevier Science, a long-standing multinational scientific publishing company headquartered in the Netherlands. Elsevier publishes internationally recognized high-quality academic journals, most of which are core journals and are included in many famous secondary literature databases worldwide. The Science Direct database includes over 2000 journals, of which approximately 1400 are ISI indexed journals. It also provides 51 reference books, 150 series books, 164 manuals, and 4000 e-books.

SpringerLink is the world's largest online academic resource platform in the fields of science, technology, and medicine (STM). With its flexible subscription model, reliable online foundation, and convenient management system, SpringerLink has become the most popular product in various libraries. Springer is a leading company in the scientific publishing industry and is renowned for its outstanding performance. Springer has published the works of over 150 Nobel laureates. SpringerLink serves 600 corporate clients and over 35,000 institutions worldwide. SpringerLink's service scope covers various research fields. It provides over 1900 peer-reviewed academic journals and continuously collects electronic reference books, e-books, laboratory guides, and online retrospective databases.

The American Chemical Society (ACS), founded in 1876, has become the world's largest scientific and technological society, with more than 150,000 members. The ACS Publications database includes all academic journals, news magazines, reagent manuals, and books published by the American Chemical Society. The total number of publications exceeds 1 million, with 40,000 new articles added every year. All articles in ACS journals and chapters in books undergo peer review. According to the Journal Citation Report (JCR) released in June 2018, ACS has 48 journals indexed by SCI, with 38 journals cited over 5000 times, earning it the title of "the most often visited and cited journal in the field of chemistry." The disciplines covered by the ACS Publications database include, but are not limited to, physical chemistry, environmental science, material science, energy and fuel, food science, pharmacology and pharmacy, biochemistry and molecular biology, analytical chemistry, organic chemistry, and inorganic and atomic energy chemistry.

#### 5. The teaching model of EAP reading based on online databases

In order to address the shortcomings of traditional teaching modes of EAP reading in China, this study constructs a teaching mode of EAP reading based on online databases and carries out corresponding experimental teaching, achieving good teaching results. Foreign language journal databases have wide coverage, abundant resources, and strong timeliness, effectively meeting the needs of EAP reading for teachers and students in universities [6].

Our research team aims to test the teaching model of EAP reading by implementing experimental teaching in a one-semester English reading and writing course. The experimental teaching subjects were two classes of the "English Reading and Writing" course at a science and engineering university in Jiangxi province. These classes comprised students from different majors, which to some extent mitigated the possible impact of disciplinary and professional factors on the research results. The controlled group followed a traditional teaching model, with teachers as the main teaching subject, textbooks as teaching materials, and lecturing as the primary teaching method. The

experimental group implemented a "Trinity" (classroom, online database, digital teaching platform) teaching mode of EAP reading. The specific steps are as follows:

(1) Grouping: At the beginning of the course, the teacher clarifies the course requirements, stating that students are expected to complete a 2000-word analytical research report of professional literature in small groups by the end of the semester. The teacher then divides students into groups based on their research interests, ensuring that the number of students in each group is approximately the same.

(2) Topic submission: In the second week of the course, students are required to submit the topics of their research reports, including the background, significance, and outline of the research report, as well as the division of labor within the group (specifying the persons responsible for each part of the research report) and weekly plans. This facilitates teachers' evaluation of the phased results. The teacher encourages students to seek professional advice from teachers, improve their English proficiency, and cultivate academic literacy, laying the foundation for future academic research.

(3) Teaching process: The teaching process is divided into three stages:

Classroom explanations: Based on students' majors and learning resources such as online foreign journal databases, teachers select authoritative English papers as examples to explain, focusing on analyzing professional vocabulary, stylistic characteristics, thinking patterns, and discourse structure. This helps students gain a better understanding of the content, structure, and language characteristics of EAP discourse [7].

Literature review with foreign journal databases: Students work in groups to collect authoritative English papers related to their group topics from free foreign journal language databases provided by the university. They share the search results in class. After class, each group is required to select 10 EAP papers from the displayed search results, published in the past 5 years, that match their research interests as research materials for the writing of research reports.

Reading EAP literature: Students focus on understanding the content of EAP papers to prepare for writing literature research reports in the future. During the literature reading process, teachers guide students on the learning platform, explain reading skills and methods, organize thematic discussions, and encourage students to find more information, thus cultivating their academic literacy and critical thinking.

Writing a research report: Students summarize their research results and write research reports according to the research plan every week. The first draft of the research report should be submitted to the learning platform. Teachers and other groups of students read, rate, and provide revision suggestions for the research report, which helps foster a sense of cooperation among students and fundamentally improves their EAP reading ability.

Achievement display: Each group revises their research reports based on the ratings and suggestions provided by the teacher and other classmates. Ultimately, they share their research results through PPT presentations.

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, EAP reading has received attention and achieved rapid development in English teaching in many universities due to its possibility to meet the needs of professional learning and research work. Among many teaching modes of EAP reading, the trinity teaching model constructed on the basis of classroom teaching, online foreign journal databases and digital learning platforms can best achieve the goal of cultivating and improving students' EAP reading skills and academic literacy.

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