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A Teacher's Guide to Academic Reading: Focusing on
the Academic Reading Demands
of ESL Learners

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

A Teacher's Guide to Academic Reading: Focusing on the Academic Reading Demands of ESL Learners

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With over 765,000 English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students studying in the United States, a greater understanding of the academic requirements and demands these students face while studying in the US is needed. Some of the biggest challenges they face include the amount of reading required and the various tasks employed with academic reading. University reading tasks require more than an understanding of the text. These tasks place a strong emphasis on text comprehension, summary, synthesis, and critical analysis. This is problematic as students, especially ESL learners, lack experience with academic tasks, and many additionally struggle with low metacognitive awareness, limited or low reading fluency, limited vocabulary, and difficulty understanding text organization. This article will present a research-informed website, *A Teacher's Guide to Academic Reading*, designed for teachers preparing ESL learners for the demands and difficulties of university reading. *A Teacher's Guide to Academic Reading* specifically informs teachers of academic reading demands and provides resources to help their learners develop fluent reading skills, critical reading skills, and general academic skills.

Keywords: academic reading, reading purposes, reading demands, reading difficulties, reading tasks, reading strategies, fluency, critical analysis

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Introduction

From 2010 to 2012 United States' colleges' and universities' total enrollment remained the same, while the total enrollment of international students increased by 6% (Pope, 2012). Farrugia, Bhandari, and Chow (2012) further report approximately 765,000 international students studied at United States campuses in 2011. In addition to this overall increase, for the first time since 2001, foreign undergraduate students outnumber foreign graduate students (Farrugia et al., 2012). This growing population of international learners studying in the United States has increased the need to clearly understand and provide support for the academic difficulties they face. Academic classes require learners to do more than comprehend (Jensen, 1986). Learners must also react, recall, and synthesize the lecture and any required readings (Shih, 1992). English as a Second Language (ESL) learners attending United States' universities have experience learning another language, but few have experience using the language to learn academically. Intensive English programs, administrators, teachers, and ESL learners must become familiar with the academic demands and skills necessary for university success.

Many ESL learners find college reading unexpectedly difficult and demanding because they feel uninformed and underprepared for the rigorous academic demands (Chase, Gibson & Carson, 1994; Shafie & Nayan, 2011; Shelyakina, 2010). This deficiency could be caused by the difficulty in defining academic reading due to the different reading requirements and tasks found in each discipline or field of study. Nevertheless, the abilities to summarize, critically analyze, synthesize, and integrate are necessary for success in all disciplines (Chase et al., 1994; Grabe, 1986; Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2014; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Gunderson, 1991; Isakson, Isakson, & Windham, 2010; Shih, 1992). This is problematic especially for ESL learners who often lack the knowledge, practice, and fluency required to gain high-level academic reading skills and

therefore struggle to keep up with the rigorous academic demands (Grabe & Stoller, 2014; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Shih, 1992). Some of the biggest challenges ESL learners face include the required amount of reading and vocabulary, as well as the need to read fluently and critically.

This article discusses a research-informed website, *A Teacher's Guide to Academic Reading (A Teacher's Guide)*, designed for teachers preparing ESL/EFL learners for the demands and difficulties of university reading. *A Teacher's Guide* specifically informs teachers of academic reading demands and provides resources to help their learners develop fluent reading skills, critical reading skills, and general academic skills.

Helping Learners Read Academically: *A Teacher's Guide to Academic Reading*

A Teacher's Guide website provides teachers with resources that will help their learners succeed while reading academically (see <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading>). Both teachers and students benefit by learning more about academic reading demands and difficulties. For example, many ESL learners fail to succeed because they struggle to keep up with the increased amount of vocabulary and readings. Therefore *A Teacher's Guide* emphasizes and facilitates the development of reading fluency skills, especially those essential skills that improve both reading rate and comprehension. Critical reading skills like those described on *A Teacher's Guide* will also benefit ESL learners as many of them lack experience with academic tasks related to synthesizing, summarizing, and critically analyzing. *A Teacher's Guide* also describes general academic skills like time management and academic planning which benefit learners as they manage their academic tasks and readings.

Additionally, teachers must help their learners intensively practice fluent and critical reading skills as well as general academic skills, like those found on *A Teacher's Guide*, in order to see the maximum benefits. Learners who receive this type of practice early in their studies and

experience success, especially when reading academic texts, understanding new vocabulary, developing reading fluency, and critically analyzing, will gain confidence and develop the necessary metacognitive awareness to use each strategy appropriately (Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2014; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Shelyakina, 2010). As learners practice and apply the skills found on *A Teacher's Guide* they will become fluent and critical readers better able to handle the academic reading difficulties.

Academic Reading Demands

Academic reading. The principle purpose of *A Teacher's Guide* is to provide teachers with resources that assist their learners to read academic texts; therefore, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what academic reading is. Academic reading is the most essential tool for academic learning (Chase et al., 1994; Grabe, 1986; Jensen, 1986; Shelyakina, 2010). Chase et al. (1994) describe this reading as “the vehicle for gathering information and ideas” (p. 12). In order to succeed, however, learners need to gather more than a basic understanding of a text. Grabe and Stoller (2011) characterize this type of reading as “the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately” (p. 3). This two-part definition shows that reading is more than simply understanding text; it also involves interpreting text. In academic settings, this is taken a step further, where learners must transform and manipulate the text based on the academic tasks required (Chase et al., 1994).

In order to transform and manipulate what ESL learners read, they must (a) recognize their purpose for reading, (b) work towards comprehension, (c) process text fluently, (d) account for their level of proficiency, and (e) account for differences in interpretations caused by social contexts (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Jensen, 1986). These five characteristics—reading purpose, comprehension, fluency, proficiency level, and text interpretation—are interconnected and affect

each other. For example, while taking their level of proficiency into account, learners can identify strategies and skills to accomplish their reading goal, as well as make strategic adjustments to their fluency to compensate for comprehension difficulties. The purpose for reading will also help guide readers towards the social contexts needed for the correct interpretations. Once academic readers have successfully gathered the information, they can then transform and manipulate that information according to the tasks required.

Each academic task requires learners to use the text differently and therefore creates the need or purpose for reading. Language proficiency tests required by universities, like the Internet based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT), can provide valuable insight as these tests strive to create tasks similar to those at the university. In the reading section of the TOEFL iBT, students read academic level passages and answer multiple-choice questions focused on the reader's ability to find ideas, understand and identify facts or details, connect ideas, understand vocabulary, make inferences, recognize paraphrases, recognize coherence, identify an author's purpose, summarize information, and organize ideas (Gallagher, 2011). Additionally, Chase et al. (1994) found academic reading assessed by means of multiple-choice exams, quizzes, essay exams, reports, worksheets, presentations, projects, study guides, and both in- and out-of-class essays. The readings were also used as a supplement to lecture, a model for writing, and a way of introducing new ideas and vocabulary. These academic reading tasks from the TOEFL iBT and Chase et al. study establish the need for readers to not only understand text, vocabulary, and text organization, but also synthesize, critically analyze, and summarize.

Additionally, reading tasks found in Shelyakina (2010) and Grabe and Zhang (2013) highlight the strong connection between reading and writing tasks. Many reading tasks required learners to “summarize information, take notes, or write short responses, critiques, or longer

research papers” (Shelyakina, 2010, p. 16). This strong reading and writing connection—or what Grabe and Zhang (2013) call reading and writing integration—is common to university tasks. Some of the tasks reported by Grabe and Zhang include taking notes, summarizing and paraphrasing the information, synthesizing and critically analyzing, answering questions, writing research or response papers, and writing literature reviews. These tasks continue the argument that university learners not only need to understand the text, but also use it to learn and gain knowledge (Chase et al., 1994; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Jensen, 1986; Shelyakina, 2010; Shih, 1992). Table 1 lists all academic reading tasks discussed in this section. A careful review of these tasks show that academic reading is therefore more than fluent comprehension, it also requires learners to use their understanding to summarize, synthesize, and critically analyze.

Table 1

Academic Reading Tasks

Read and understand passages
Complete multiple-choice exams
Complete quizzes
Complete essay exams
Complete worksheets
Complete projects
Complete study guides
Write in- and out-of-class essays
Write short responses
Write reflective essays
Write reports
Write long research papers
Write a literature review
Write a critical analysis
Prepare presentations
Prepare and participate in discussions
Review a text model
Learn new ideas and vocabulary
Critically analyze text
Summarize information
Paraphrase information
Take notes
Synthesize or combine information
Compare multiple points

(Chase et al., 1994; Gallagher, 2011; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Shelyakina, 2010; Shih, 1992)

ESL reading difficulties. In addition to understanding academic reading and its tasks, a clear understanding of the reading difficulties faced by ESL learners further provides the

foundation for the resources found on *A Teacher's Guide*. Looking at the characteristics and tasks of academic reading, especially summarizing, synthesizing, and critically analyzing, it is easy to see why many ESL learners find academic reading debilitating (Jensen 1986; Shih, 1992). Shelyakina (2010) identified several academic challenges and difficulties through her comprehensive review of related ESL research over the past 30 years (see Cheng, 1996; Christison & Krahnke, 1986; James, 2006; Ostler, 1980; Sheorey, Mokhtari, & Livingston, 1995; Smoke, 1988). Though some of the research reviewed is dated, Shelyakina asserts that current academic demands and difficulties reflect similar results. Table 2 lists some of the most salient reading difficulties and challenges found in her review.

Table 2
Academic Reading Challenges for ESL Learners

Limited note-taking skills
Limited experience with authentic and realistic tasks
Limited interaction with native peers (L1 learners)
Limited transfer of skills (even those learned in content-based instruction)
Unprepared for reading academic tasks and listening to lectures
Unprepared for reading and studying from textbooks
Difficulty understanding their textbooks
Difficulty applying reading strategies
Lack of academic vocabulary and vocabulary comprehension strategies
Lack of general comprehension
Lack of reading fluency
Lack of metacognitive awareness
Lack of text organization knowledge
Spend or need additional time to accomplish readings

(Shelyakina, 2010, pp. 25-31)

Many of these difficulties identified by Shelyakina's (2010) review are echoed by Grabe and Zhang (2013). They, too, found ESL learners lacking fluency, having limited proficiency, struggling to read long passages, lacking background or cultural knowledge, and having limited experience with academic tasks, especially those reading/writing tasks requiring learners to summarize, synthesize, and integrate. Grabe and Zhang believe that ESL learners who struggle with limited vocabulary, reading comprehension, and composition skills often, and sometimes unknowingly, misuse text. In addition, cultural differences could lead learners to misuse the text

by directly copying or plagiarizing. As a result, ESL learners' challenges and difficulties can not only hinder their learning, but these difficulties can also have serious consequences, such as failing an assignment or being put on academic suspension. Learners therefore need detailed instructions and intensive practice with academic reading, as prescribed by Grabe and Zhang, in order to succeed academically.

Shafie and Nayan (2011) further note that many ESL readers experience difficulties with academic reading because they are surface readers. Surface readers lack critical skills such as identifying the author's purpose, connecting the text to background knowledge, and viewing reading metacognitively—being able to predict, plan, and evaluate what and how they are reading. These readers may read and even memorize the text, but they fail in their efforts to critique and critically use it. Shafie and Nayan identified over 40 characteristics of surface ESL readers from their observations and interviews. Table 3 lists these characteristics.

Table 3

Characteristics of Surface L2 Readers

Struggle to comprehend texts
Fail to integrate sources
Over-rely on text-based inferences
Fail to understand content and strategies
Struggle to find meaning beyond the literal text
Forget how and what they read
Memorize new or unfamiliar information
Fail to monitor meaning (passively read)
Infrequently use reading strategies
Fail to remedy comprehension failures
Rely on initial predictions
View reading situations helplessly or as failure situations
Fail to focus their purpose
Fail to see situations effect on monitoring, integration, and understanding
Have low proficiency
Have limited vocabulary
Struggle with formal or advanced language
Have limited comprehension due to limited vocabulary
Lack experience
Lack knowledge of academic text structure
Have difficulty analyzing text organization
Have difficulty finding the implied meanings
Have difficulty understanding the components of a text
Limited or no interaction with the text
Do not relate text to previous knowledge or experience

Do not relate textual evidence with conclusions
 Do not evaluate the logic of an argument
 Lack critical thinking skills
 Use and know a limited number of reading strategies (which they use all the time, with all the tasks)
 Do not use memory skills
 Lack self-confidence
 Struggle to answer questions about analysis, synthesis and evaluations
 Find it hard to synthesize texts
 Find it hard to generalize information
 Find it hard to compare and discriminate between ideas
 Fail to assess the value of theories
 Fail to assess the value of evidence
 Fail to identify writer's intended meaning
 Fail to identify writer's opinion
 Limited or poor dictionary skills
 Lack reading fluency
 Unable to transfer knowledge and skills to new contexts
 Fail to find main ideas
 Fail to use contextual clues

(Shafie & Nayan, 2011, pp. 5-8)

These characteristics echo the most salient and problematic difficulties experienced by ESL readers: lack of metacognitive awareness, limited or low reading fluency, limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding text organization, lack of experience with academic tasks—especially with reading tasks related to synthesizing, summarizing, and critically analyzing (Chase et al., 1994; Grabe & Stoller, 2014; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Shafie & Nayan, 2011; Shelyakina, 2010; Sheorey, Mokhtari & Livingston, 1995).

Fluent Reading Skills

With this understanding of academic reading demands and difficulties, it is clear that ESL learners need to be fluent readers in order to meet these demands. *A Teacher's Guide* describes fluent reading as more than reading rate, asserting the two additional and major components of reading comprehension and metacognitive awareness (Stone, 2013). Anderson (2008b) defines fluent reading as "the ability to read at an appropriate rate with adequate comprehension" (p. 3). Reading at an appropriate rate may be reading rapidly, but a fluent reader must also comprehend what they read. So what is an appropriate reading rate and comprehension? ESL learners compete with experienced native students and adults who average 300 words-per-minute (wpm),

but are encouraged to read at least 400-600 wpm, with 90% comprehension (Frank, 1990; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Gunderson, 1991; Jensen, 1986). While this is the norm for native speakers, who have years of reading experience and practice, it is not realistic for many ESL learners. Anderson (2014) sets the ESL fluency standard for adult second language (L2) readers of reading at 200 wpm with 70% comprehension.

In addition to rate and comprehension, fluent readers are aware of their personal reading process. This means learners are both actively and strategically reading (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Active readers know why they are reading (their reading purpose) and how they are reading (their reading skills). Grabe and Stoller (2011) describe this type of reading as a series of processes including rapid, efficient, interactive, strategic, flexible, evaluative, purposeful, comprehensive, learning, and linguistic. Fluent readers actively monitor these processes and make the necessary adjustments in order to insure reading comprehension. Readers who accomplish this feat can be considered metacognitive readers.

Shafie and Nayan (2011) define metacognitive reading as a self-awareness used to predict, plan, and evaluate what and how they read. Anderson (2008a, 2014) adds to this definition with his five interactive subcategories of metacognition (see Table 4). In addition to predicting, planning, and evaluating, Anderson's definition includes selecting, using, monitoring, and orchestrating strategies. Utilizing these categories will help learners not only reflect but also evaluate their reading process and increase their ability to control it, and thereby read strategically (Anderson, 2014).

Therefore, the idea that fluent reading is simply reading fast is incomplete. Fluent adult L2 readers (a) read at appropriate rates of at least 200 wpm, (b) comprehend 70% of what they read, and (c) are metacognitively aware of their reading process by being active and strategic

(Anderson, 2008a, 2008b, 2012, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Shafie & Nayan, 2011, Stone, 2013).

Table 4
Anderson's Five Subcategories of Metacognition

Category	Definition
1. Preparing and planning for learning	Activating knowledge and experience—life, education, language, and text organization. If learners lack background knowledge, build it first before moving on to the task.
2. Selecting and using particular strategies	Knowing what strategies and when to use those strategies to accomplish your goal or purpose. Learners need to be explicitly aware of strategies use and possess a range of strategies.
3. Monitoring learning	Perceiving when you do or do not understand. It also involves monitoring the strategy's effectiveness.
4. Orchestrating and combining strategies	Using multiple strategies simultaneously in order to build comprehension and understanding. Strategies are not used in isolation, but should be clustered (Anderson, 2008b).
5. Evaluating learning	Recognizing the success or failure of their learning. They also can evaluate the efficiency of their learning.

(Anderson, 2008a, p. 100-102; 2014, p. 99)

With this understanding of fluent reading, teacher's can address all three components—reading rate, reading comprehension, and metacognitive awareness—by teaching the skills found on *A Teacher's Guide* (see <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!fluent-reading/c12dl>). It is important to note that reading fluency depends a lot on the difficulty of the text. ESL readers can start fluency development early as they read basic texts. Once readers move beyond the rate and comprehension goals of 200 wpm and 70% comprehension, they can begin to engage in more difficult and academic texts. By starting fluency development early, learners can experience university level texts *before* they reach the university, and thereby be better prepared to meet their academic reading demands (Shelyakina, 2010; Grabe & Zhang, 2013).

Developing reading rate. To develop appropriate reading rates, the website, *A Teacher's Guide*, describes the following rate development activities recommended and used by both native and ESL learners alike: repeated readings, paced readings, rate push-down, rate build-up and shadow reading (Anderson, 2008b, 2014; Frank, 1990; Grabe, 1986, 2009; Grabe &

Stoller, 2011, 2014; Jensen, 1986; Stone, 2013). The “Paced Reading” drill is an effective rate building activity on *A Teacher’s Guide*. In this drill the individual learner sets a reading fluency goal—for example, 200 wpm. Learners mark the text according to their goal—in this case every 200 words. Learners will read a text for five to seven minutes, with an alarm marking (or teacher calling out) every minute. At each minute, whether or not they have finished reading the marked section, learners move forward to the next section (Stone, 2013). This is especially effective because learners have to actively monitor their progress and make strategic adjustments, thereby developing metacognitive awareness. For this drill and all others described in the rate development section, teachers and learners should include a comprehension check after the drill. This could be in the form of writing or speaking a short summary, or answering pre-written questions. For more rate building activities visit the following page:

<http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!reading-rate-strategies/c16qk>.

Developing reading comprehension. To develop reading comprehension, *A Teacher’s Guide* describes activities and strategies that increase both vocabulary and general reading comprehension (Stone, 2013). Unknown words and unfamiliar text structures will slow learners’ reading rate and cause comprehension confusion. Chase et al. (1994) and Shelyakina (2010) found this to be especially true of academic texts. Learners in both studies reported academic vocabulary being one of the highest and most concerning demands. Because many learners get stuck on unknown vocabulary, they need strategies in addition to using the dictionary. “Vocabulary Learning Strategies,” from *A Teacher’s Guide*, inform teachers about word families, parts of speech, collocations, synonyms, antonyms, and word parts—prefixes, suffixes, and roots. For example, memorizing Shaywitz’s (2003) 20 prefixes that “account for 97 percent of all words with prefixes found in English schoolbooks” (p. 239) will not only increase

vocabulary knowledge, but also these prefixes can increase learners' reading rate because learners are able to break down unknown words faster. (See Table 5 for the complete list.)

Table 5
Top 20 Prefixes

1. Un- (not)	11. Pre- (before)
2. Re- (again)	12. Inter- (between)
3. In-, im-, il-, ir- (not)	13. Fore- (earlier)
4. Dis- (not)	14. De- (reverse)
5. En-, em- (put into)	15. Trans- (across)
6. Non- (not)	16. Super- (above)
7. In-, im- (in)	17. Semi- (half)
8. Over- (excessive)	18. Anti- (opposite)
9. Mis- (bad)	19. Mid- (middle)
10. Sub- (below)	20. Under- (to little)

(Shaywitz, 2003, p. 239-240)

In addition to building vocabulary, multiple readings exercises can also help learners develop fluent comprehension because these structured readings provide multiple exposures to the content. As learners read and reread the content with different purposes and in different ways they will gain a sense of comprehension and can better see how the information is connected. *A Teacher's Guide* describes two multiple readings strategies: SQ3R and Layered Reading (Frank, 1990; Isakson et al., 2010; Stone, 2013). In "Layered Reading" learners complete the following five steps. Step 1: Overview has learners quickly skim the text to create a mental outline of the passage. Step 2: Preview is where learners skim the passage again, but this time creating a map of key concepts. Step 3: learners read the text at a normal rate filling in the details and facts. Step 4: after they finish this read, learners skim the material again to find relationships and connections among the ideas. Step 5: Review is the last step that can be done anytime learners want to remember what the text is about (Frank, 1990; Stone, 2103). This reading fluency strategy is excellent as it has both reading rate and comprehension built into each step. Learners also develop metacognitive awareness as they adapt the steps to their individual needs and

academic tasks. For more vocabulary and general reading comprehension skills visit the following page: <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!/cotc>.

Developing metacognitive awareness. *A Teacher's Guide* also facilitates fluent reader's metacognitive awareness through its discussion of the four general categories of reading: *reading to search*, *reading to comprehend*, *reading to learn*, and *reading to integrate* (Stone, 2013). The most effective and efficient readers set a goal or purpose before they read. Readers are able to make strategic adjustments to their fluency to match their purpose (Grabe & Stoller, 2014). Each of these purposes is important to understand because they determine how the learners will read, what strategy they will use, and at what rate they will read.

For example, when studying for a vocabulary test, learners use the purpose of *reading to search*. Learners quickly skim the reading, identifying the vocabulary term and its definition. They do not need a complete understanding that would come from *reading to learn* or *reading to integrate*. They simply need the vocabulary terms and definition. Most academic reading tasks have an element of *reading to search*, and with small class assignments, this purpose may be sufficient. Though *reading to integrate* and *reading to learn*, seem to be more academic, each of the four purposes of academic reading should be discussed and understood. To learn more about these reading purposes visit the following page: <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!/reading-with-purpose/c1p66>.

Critical Reading Skills

In addition to fluent reading skills, teachers can use critical reading skills found on *A Teacher's Guide* to help students address academic reading demands and difficulties. Critical reading requires learners to do something with their comprehension. Chase et al. describe this type of reading as a transformation “through analysis and synthesis” (1994, p. 12). Academic

assessments and tasks, such as papers, presentations, and exams, require learners to analyze and synthesize the text (Chase et al., 1994). This use of text analysis and synthesis creates the high demand for academic reading that is not only challenging but often unfamiliar and difficult for ESL students as they additionally need to evaluate their readings, draw conclusions, and make inferences (Chase et al., 1994; Gallagher, 2011; Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2014; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Shafie & Nayan, 2011; Shelyakina, 2010). Consequently, a simple scan-and-remember will not work for ESL learners. Teachers, in Chase et al.'s study, state it is through the synthesis and analysis of multiple sources that students often gain new information and ideas. Shafie and Nayan (2011) likened critical reading to solving a problem and described reading skills and strategies as the tools for academic success. Therefore, critical reading is effectively using analysis and synthesis in order to learn from a text.

Many teachers and students are unfamiliar or easily confuse analysis and synthesis; however, these critical reading skills are different. When analyzing, learners use skills to break down the text, much like top-down processing. Synthesizing, on the other hand, also looks for connections but in this case learners are building meaning—main ideas, themes, and so on—from these connections and details (much like bottom-up processing).

Additionally, analysis skills such as identifying main ideas and supporting details, recognizing rhetorical forms and devices, identifying patterns of organization, predicting and anticipating, identifying paragraph functions, separating fact and opinion, and recognizing author's purpose or point of view all contribute to a reader's ability to break down text (Jensen, 1986). Learners have a complete picture and break it down into individual pieces in order to see their connection and significance.

On the other hand, synthesis is much like a puzzle where learners have the individual pieces, but must connect them in order to create the complete picture. Bailey (2003) describes synthesis as finding similar arguments among sources and evaluating whether they agree or disagree. Grabe and Zhang (2013) describe it as the students' ability to compare information, identify problems and solutions, and understand the different positions of an issue as synthesizing skills. As a result, synthesizing is not merely a comparison of two or more sources; it also involves evaluating, analyzing, and interpreting the text (Grabe & Zhang, 2013).

What do learners do with their knowledge gained from analysis and synthesis? They integrate it. Many academic tasks require learners to use, or integrate, multiple sources. The most common integration tasks are writing. Many ESL students struggle to correctly integrate and cite sources in their own writing (Bailey, 2003; Grabe & Zhang, 2013). The practice of summarizing, citing, and integrating is often lacking in many academic prep programs. Grabe and Zhang (2013) describe the problem of text misuse or plagiarism as the "main issue for synthesis writing" (p.16). With cultural rules, stigmas, and academic consequences surrounding plagiarism, Grabe and Zhang strongly recommend explicitly teaching students how to effectively and appropriately summarize, paraphrase, and integrate information. Based on these results and previously reported academic tasks, critical academic reading is therefore more than knowing information; rather, it is knowing how to analyze, synthesize, and effectively integrate.

With this understanding of critical reading, teachers can introduce their learners to activities and skills that facilitate analysis, synthesis, and integration. These types of activities and skills can be found below and on *A Teacher's Guide* website

(<http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!critical-reading/c22d1>).

Developing analysis and synthesis skills. To develop critical reading analysis and synthesis, *A Teacher's Guide* describes activities to help learners understand discourse markers and use organizational patterns (Frank, 1990; Isakson et al., 2010; Stone, 2013). ESL learners can use graphic organizers, like those described in “Organizational Patterns,” to assist them with their analysis and synthesis. Learners using these organizational patterns can

see the text structure and organization, create or discover the main idea, learn and organize information as they read, synthesize by finding relationships between ideas and content, analyze a text's argument or main idea, summarize what they have learned (in their own words), monitor their comprehension, create notes and reviews, or prove what they are learning and comprehending. (Stone, 2013)

When used to analyze, learners can fill out or create one of these patterns as they read their academic texts. Additionally, these organizational patterns can be used to develop synthesis skills as learners listen to lectures or read texts on similar topics. However, simply reading and listening is not enough, teachers would also need to provide directed instruction on how to synthesize by making connections and building comprehension using the multiple sources. To learn more about these organization patterns as well as additional analysis and synthesis skills visit the following page: <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!critical-reading/c22d1>

Developing integration skills. To help learners integrate what they read, *A Teacher's Guide* provides the following resources: Originality Steps and Checklists, and Citation Resources (Stone, 2013). Because ESL learners struggle to integrate text and the strong consequences of text misuse and plagiarism, *A Teacher's Guide* focuses on giving students strategies and steps to correctly use their own words—summarize and paraphrase. “Originality Steps and Checklists” describe what and how to paraphrase and summarize. For example, the steps to paraphrasing are

as follows: (1) clearly understand the text, (2) break down the quote or text, (3) change the vocabulary, (4) change the sentence structure, (5) synthesize and edit, and (6) cite the source (Stone, 2013). Many students fail to change either the vocabulary or the sentence structure, and additionally, they may not know how to cite their source. However, in order to be a complete and plagiarism-free paraphrase all steps need to be followed. These steps and checklists found on <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!originality-steps-and-checklists/c1pov> as well as the resources found in the General Academic Skills section on <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!citation-resources/cesb> will help learners learn how to effectively and appropriately integrate what they have read, increasing their academic reading ability.

General Academic Skills

Academic reading alone is very demanding, and many learners find it hard to stay on top of their lectures, assignments, readings, and exams. ESL learners can become self-directed learners who are able to set effective goals and priorities, while realistically scheduling their time by using the resources found on *A Teacher's Guide* (Gonzalez, 2013; Stone, 2013).

Unfortunately, many learners lack the knowledge or motivation to manage their time. Those who manage their time not only have a higher grade-point average (GPA), but also experience less anxiety and stress and are better able to adapt to the university culture (Dembo, 2004). Learners who set goals, prioritize their academic tasks, and create a schedule will be better able to handle the overwhelming amount of required reading. These management skills can also transfer specifically to academic reading, helping learners make critical decisions on what, when, and how to read (Stone, 2013).

In addition to management skills, ESL learners struggle with academic tasks that require the integration of multiple language skills. As noted earlier, reading tasks that also require

writing are difficult for ESL learners (Grabe & Zhang, 2013). Most often, the information gained from reading and lecture will be used to complete writing tasks, like an essay or short-answer exam, a reading response, or a research paper. This requires learners to not only integrate multiple sources in their writing, but also to correctly cite or reference these sources. Learning basic writing skills can help readers with both analysis (as they learn more about text structure and organization) and integration (how to write a summary or correctly cite information).

Teachers should strive to integrate self-motivation, time management, and integration skills into their curriculum. Their learners will require the same explicit instruction and intensive practice prescribed by Grabe and Zhang (2013). ESL learners can gain some of these skills by using the resources found in the General Academic Skills section of the website, *A Teacher's Guide* (<http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!academic-skills/cjah>).

Time management skills. To help learners become self-motivated and better able to manage their time, *A Teacher's Guide* suggests following this three step process: (1) Set S.M.A.R.T. goals, (2) Set priorities, (3) Create a schedule (Stone, 2013). One of the greatest time management skills is setting priorities. In "Step 2: Set Priorities," *A Teacher's Guide* describes an academic adaptation of Steven Covey's (1989) urgency and importance chart. This chart helps learners break down their academic tasks into the following categories: *Important—Urgent*, *Not Important—Urgent*, *Important—Not Urgent*, and *Not Important—Not Urgent* (Covey, 1989; Stone, 2013). Most often students fail to plan ahead and only do the most urgent tasks, regardless of importance (Dembo, 2004). This means they leave the larger and more time intensive tasks, like term papers or final exams, to the last minute. However, once learners have organized their tasks into these four categories, teachers can give explicit instruction on how to handle the *Important—Not Urgent* tasks, while decreasing the amount of time spent in the "Not Important"

boxes. The other time management steps can be found on <http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!time-management/c1epi>.

Basic integrated writing skills. Teachers can help their learners better integrate what they read by using the resources found on the Citation Resources section of *A Teacher's Guide* (<http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!citation-resources/cesb>). These two pages describe the basic citation style of Chicago, Modern Language Association (MLA), and American Psychological Association (APA), as well as provide links to online citation resources such as Plagiarism.com, Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), citation generators, and a writing style manual's online resources (Stone, 2013). Purdue OWL is one of the greatest online writing tools for both teachers and learners. Through this website learners can gain the analysis and integration skills discussed above. However, in this section of the website, *A Teacher's Guide* links students to the pages on research and citation, as well as a citation style comparison chart (Stone, 2013). Teachers can use these links and the other resources found in this section to help their learners avoid the issue of text misuse and misrepresentation (plagiarism) described by Grabe and Zhang (2013).

Helpful Reading Resources

In addition to providing teacher with fluent, critical, and general academic skills, *A Teacher's Guide* links teachers to additional tools and resources that can help ESL learners become fluent and critical readers. Teachers can direct students towards these tools in order to allow for extensive practice, noted by Grabe and Zhang (2013) and Shelyakina (2010), to continue outside of class. *A Teacher's Guide* connects teachers and students to the following list of suggested online resources: Additional Reading Strategies, American Institute's Reading Strategies, Downloadable Graphic Organizers, Quizlet.com, Lexile.com,

Englishvocabularyexercises.com, Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), University Library Pages, Evernote, A Pocket Style Manual's Online Resources, Teleprompters, and Reading Rate Checks (Stone, 2013). All of these resources focused on helping learners become fluent and critical readers can be found on the following page:

<http://eslbeck.wix.com/academic-reading#!reading-resources/csez>.

Resources helpful for fluency. Students can use the following resources to increase their reading fluency: Additional Reading Strategies, American institute's Reading Strategies, Lexile.com, Englishvocabularyexercises.com, COCA, Teleprompters, and Reading Rate Checks (Stone, 2013). According to Anderson's (2014) fluency definition, students are reading at level texts with 200 wpm and 70% comprehension. "Lexile.com" is a great resource because it can help both teachers and learners find resources that are at the learner's reading level. Most college textbooks' Lexile levels are between 1250L and 1450L (MetaMetrics, 2013). Teachers and learners can search for books at a specific Lexile level, analyze an electronic text, and even find learners Lexile level based on their TOEFL iBT reading score. For teachers and learners, this allows them to quantify their reading level and find additional practice readings.

Resources helpful for critical reading. The Helpful Reading Resources section of *A Teacher's Guide*, also provides the following resources that help develop critical reading skills: Additional Reading Strategies, American institute's Reading Strategies, Downloadable Graphic Organizers, Quizlet.com, University Library Pages, Evernote, and A Pocket Style Manual's Online Resources (Stone, 2013). For example, the online notebook, "Evernote" is a great resource for analysis and synthesis. With Evernote learners can take notes and "also organize these notes into folders, label the notes by keywords, and search their 'notebook' " (Stone, 2013). Students can take notes as they read and listen to lecture, specifically writing down any

questions or analysis. Because of Evernote's search feature, students can then search their notes for any overarching topics, themes, and comparisons. These resources, in addition to fluent reading, critical reading, and general academic skills, can help teachers prepare their ESL learners to overcome the difficulties and demands of academic reading.

Website Evaluation

To ensure *A Teacher's Guide's* effectiveness and usefulness in helping address the challenges of academic reading, three current academic ESL teachers participated in individual interviews lasting about an hour for the purpose of giving specific feedback. In these interviews the teachers discussed the resources in each section of *A Teacher's Guide* to identify ways to improve them. To facilitate the discussion each teacher was asked the following questions: (1) What are your first impressions of the website and its resources? (2) What are the advantages of the website and its resources? (3) What are the limitations of the website and its resources? (4) What additions should be made in order for the website and its resource to be complete? And (5) should anything be deleted?

First, teachers had very positive feedback. They liked the fact that the website is “welcoming and clutter free” (Teacher 3) with a “simple and not overwhelming” (Teacher 2) layout. One teacher, who is also an administrator, was very excited, saying the website was “really good for ‘our’ teachers because it helps them to move past the ‘what do I do?’ and helps give them more strategies and direction” (Teacher 1). Another teacher liked that fact that most pages are short and could be printed out on one page. However, one of the greatest features, agreed upon by all teachers, is that the resources are all encompassing. Teachers “don’t have to look far” (Teacher 2) for the resources they need.

These teachers also had suggestions for improvement. Much of the content was blocked into overwhelming paragraphs. For example, while the “Reading Purposes” section was good information for teachers, the content was overwhelming. To help overcome this content issue, subpages were created for this section, as well as other content heavy pages. In “Reading Purposes” each purpose received its own page. When the pages could not be broken down further, key points were bolded or put into lists for quick reference.

Another suggested improvement included creating clearer definitions of reading skills and resources. Originally, the website supplied skills for “Fluent Readers,” “Critical Readers,” and “Integrated Readers.” However, two teachers struggled to see how critical and integrated readers differed. Further reflection yielded the realization that critical readers are those who use analysis and synthesis in order to perform integration tasks. Because integrated readers use the same skills as critical readers the main sections were reorganized to “Fluent Reading Skills,” “Critical Reading Skills,” and “General Reading Skills.”

Because of time constraints and website limitations, not all issues were addressed. Navigation could be further simplified, as teachers must scroll through the pages to find a specific resource. Additionally, this site could also become more mobile friendly by increasing font size and the further breaking down of content. However the two most salient suggestions include creating resources and exercises to practice the prescribed skills as well as creating demonstration videos. These suggestions would help teachers better understand how to use the resources found on *A Teacher’s Guide* and increase the value of the website.

Conclusion

Keeping critical reading, fluent reading, and general academic skills found on *A Teacher’s Guide* in mind, researchers can do more to further the understanding of academic

reading and develop more resources to support academic ESL readers. Though reading tasks listed in this article can be found across multiple disciplines, a more current study, like that of Chase et al. (1994), with an ESL audience can create a clearer definition of academic reading. Additionally, surveying ESL learners who currently study at a university, like Shelyakina (2010), will help researchers and developers understand the difficulties and demands faced by this community of learners. These additional studies can validate the current understanding of academic reading and increase academic reading awareness—both reading demands and tasks, as well as ESL difficulties.

Anderson, Evans, and Hartshorn (2013) are currently working on a nationwide survey of these demands. They surveyed five academic units from 20 institutions with high international student enrollment. From their results, they hope to identify university reading and writing expectations—both type and amount—placed on students. This study, along with large-scale investigations similar to Chase et al.'s (1994) and Shelyakina's (2010), will help define academic reading, create greater awareness, and allow for better preparation not only for students, but also for ESL academic preparatory programs, university admissions, academic reading teachers, and academic reading resources—like *A Teacher's Guide*.

Besides additional research, developing and using more authentic academic reading materials and tasks based on known demands and difficulties will better prepare ESL learners for the university. University tasks require more than an understanding of the text (Chase et al., 1994). Academic reading tasks place a strong emphasis on text comprehension, summary, synthesis, and critical analysis (Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Jensen, 1986; Shelyakina, 2010; Shih, 1992). ESL learners lack experience with these academic tasks, and many additionally struggle with low metacognitive awareness, limited or low reading fluency, limited vocabulary, and

difficulty understanding text organization (Chase et al., 1994; Grabe & Stoller, 2014; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Shafie & Nayan, 2011; Shelyakina, 2010). Many lack skills necessary for fluent, critical, and integrated reading. Learners will be more successful if they are taught and can practice academic tasks and skills in a scaffolded and supported environment before entering the university (Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Shelyakina, 2010). Consequently, ESL academic preparatory programs, academic reading teachers, and administrators need to prepare learners early, use resources based on current research—like *A Teacher's Guide*—and continue academic reading research.

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