

**MODERN METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO UZBEK STUDENTS.
INTEGRATED READING SKILLS AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

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Abstract: English reading competence is a critical skill for university students in Uzbekistan, where proficiency in English opens access to global knowledge and academic resources. This article reviews modern methods of teaching English reading to Uzbek learners with a focus on an integrated skills approach. Recent research from 2024–2025 is analyzed to highlight innovative digital tools (educational apps, online platforms, AI-driven resources) alongside traditional classroom strategies that develop integrated reading skills. The findings indicate that multimedia e-reading platforms and AI-powered tools can enhance comprehension and engagement, while integrated classroom practices—such as reading-writing tasks, collaborative discussions, and critical reading exercises—reinforce students’ reading competence in context. Challenges, including digital literacy gaps and the need for teacher training, are also discussed. The article concludes with practical suggestions for educators to combine technology with evidence-based pedagogical strategies to cultivate advanced reading skills among Uzbek EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students at the tertiary level.

Keywords: English Reading Skills; Integrated Skills Approach; Digital Learning Tools; EFL in Uzbekistan; University Education; Reading Comprehension; Teaching Methodologies

Introduction

Developing strong English reading skills is of paramount importance for Uzbek university students in today’s globalized academic environment. Reading in English allows students to access international textbooks, research articles, and online information, directly impacting their academic success and future career opportunities. In Uzbekistan, ongoing educational reforms emphasize improving English proficiency, recognizing that reading competence underpins critical thinking and lifelong learning habits. For instance, *academic reading* is distinguished from casual reading by its demand for analytical and critical engagement with texts, which in turn fosters students’ disciplinary knowledge and cognitive development.

Teaching reading effectively to Uzbek EFL learners requires strategies that go beyond traditional translation or rote learning. Educators increasingly advocate an integrated skills approach, wherein reading is taught in combination with writing, speaking, and listening to mirror authentic language use. This integrated approach provides more realistic communication contexts and reinforces language acquisition by linking skills; for example, students might discuss or write about what they read, thereby practicing multiple skills simultaneously. As one Uzbek researcher noted, integrating reading and writing involves incorporating them into every lesson with a common objective, so that improvement in one skill reinforces development in the

other . Such an approach contrasts with past practices that taught skills in isolation, and it aligns with modern communicative teaching principles.

Equally important, the rise of digital technology has transformed how students read and how teachers can teach reading. University students now frequently encounter English texts on screens—web articles, PDFs, e-books—and use digital tools for translation or note-taking. In Uzbekistan, as in much of the world, digital media and devices have become dominant platforms for reading, which influences students' comprehension and attention spans in new ways. Teachers must therefore adopt methodologies that not only build traditional literacy but also leverage technology to engage “digital-native” learners. Recent studies (2024–2025) provide insight into effective practices, from online reading platforms and mobile apps that motivate students, to classroom techniques like critical reading exercises that deepen understanding. This article provides an overview of these modern methods, discussing both cutting-edge digital tools and proven classroom strategies for developing integrated reading competence among Uzbek university students. Current research findings are cited to support each approach, offering evidence-based guidance for educators and researchers interested in EFL reading pedagogy.

Body

Digital Tools and Online Resources for Integrated Reading Skills

Contemporary language-learning pedagogy emphasizes the use of digital tools to enhance reading instruction. A 2024 analysis highlights that various digital platforms – including e-books, online libraries, and annotation tools – can significantly improve students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, and information synthesis skills . These tools offer features that traditional print texts cannot. For example, e-readers and reading apps often provide instant dictionary look-up and text-to-speech functions, which support vocabulary acquisition and reading fluency for EFL learners . By hearing the pronunciation of unfamiliar words or having difficult passages read aloud, Uzbek students can better understand English texts. Such features are especially helpful at the university level, where academic texts may contain complex terminology.

Online reading platforms also enable a more personalized and engaging reading experience. They give learners access to a vast range of texts (from news articles to literature) and often allow filtering by difficulty level or topic. This means students can select readings suited to their proficiency and interests, which boosts motivation and fosters extensive reading practice . Some platforms incorporate interactive elements: quizzes, vocabulary games, and discussion forums that provide immediate feedback and social interaction. These features help students monitor their comprehension in real-time. Indeed, web-based reading exercises with instant feedback have been shown to help learners track progress and stay engaged . Such adaptivity and interactivity cater to diverse learning styles and keep students actively involved in reading tasks .

In addition to general e-reading tools, dedicated educational applications and platforms have emerged to target reading skills. For instance, ReadWorks – a nonprofit online reading platform – has been studied as an intervention for EFL students. In a recent 2025 action research project, university EFL students significantly improved their reading comprehension after regular

practice on ReadWorks, and they responded positively to the integration of this technology into their curriculum. The digital platform provided level-appropriate passages with comprehension questions, enabling students to practice reading strategies in a structured way. The success of such an approach in one EFL context suggests that similar online resources could be employed in Uzbekistan to supplement traditional reading instruction. Other apps and learning management systems (LMS) also support reading development: for example, teachers can use an LMS to assign weekly reading passages and require students to keep digital reading logs or journals. This encourages extensive reading and reflection, while allowing instructors to monitor students' progress and provide feedback through the platform.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have recently entered the EFL classroom as well, offering innovative support for language skills. ChatGPT and similar AI chatbots can assist reading instruction by answering students' questions about a text, explaining difficult vocabulary, or even generating summaries and quiz questions. A study of university teachers in Uzbekistan (published in 2025) found that educators see considerable potential in AI tools like ChatGPT as a teaching aid. Teachers reported that these tools can provide students with real-time feedback and enhance autonomous learning – for example, a student confused by a reading can ask the AI for clarification on grammar or context. Such instant support can help learners get unstuck and maintain their reading flow without always waiting for a teacher's help. Moreover, AI-driven platforms can adapt to the learner's level, offering easier rephrasings or extra explanations as needed, which personalizes the reading experience.

However, teachers also voiced important cautions: over-reliance on AI assistance may undermine the development of critical thinking, and students need guidance on the ethical use of AI in learning. For example, if students use AI to do all their translations or summaries, they might bypass the cognitive effort that leads to genuine skill growth. Thus, while digital tools and AI can augment reading instruction, they should be integrated thoughtfully. Educators in Uzbekistan must ensure that students possess the digital literacy to use these tools effectively and critically. Indeed, researchers emphasize that challenges like uneven student access to technology and varying digital skill levels must be addressed for digital interventions to succeed. Equitable implementation strategies – such as providing training sessions on using e-reading apps or ensuring campus internet access – are necessary to avoid widening the gap between students. When implemented carefully, modern digital tools hold transformative potential for improving reading proficiency, offering Uzbek students engaging ways to practice reading beyond the confines of the classroom. By blending technology with pedagogy, teachers can create a rich, multimedia reading environment that prepares students for the demands of academic reading in the 21st century.

Traditional Integrated Classroom Strategies for Reading Competence. While technology offers new opportunities, traditional classroom strategies remain crucial for developing integrated reading competence. Modern methodologies emphasize that reading should not be taught in isolation; instead, it should be interwoven with writing, speaking, and listening activities to mirror real-life use of language. One effective practice is to design reading-into-writing tasks. For example, after reading an article or story, students might write a summary, a reflective response, or an essay debating the ideas. Research in Uzbekistan supports this approach: integrating reading and writing tasks under a common instructional goal reinforces both skills and deepens language mastery. When students must articulate in writing what they have understood from a text, they process the material more thoughtfully and solidify their

comprehension. Similarly, having learners present or discuss what they read (integrating speaking with reading) can improve their ability to interpret texts and convey information clearly. The integrated-skills approach thus creates a synergy among language skills, making the learning experience more cohesive and meaningful for university students.

Explicit strategy instruction is another pillar of modern reading pedagogy. Uzbek learners, like many EFL students, benefit from being taught *how* to read strategically in a foreign language. This involves training in both bottom-up skills (like decoding vocabulary and grammar) and top-down skills (like predicting content or inferring meaning from context). In particular, educators now stress critical reading strategies that push students beyond surface comprehension. Critical reading is “not one activity but a collection of thinking skills” employed during reading. Key strategies include *previewing* a text to anticipate its content, *annotating* or taking notes on main ideas, *summarizing* paragraphs to check understanding, *analyzing* the author’s arguments, and *questioning* the text’s assumptions or biases. Teaching these strategies in the classroom (through modeling and guided practice) equips students to engage with academic texts more actively and critically – a necessary competence at the university level. A 2024 study on Uzbek secondary students demonstrated the benefits of introducing such critical reading activities, noting improvements in students’ analytical skills and awareness of perspectives in what they read. Although that study focused on school pupils, the same principles apply in higher education: students learn more when they interrogate texts, rather than passively absorb information.

Collaborative learning techniques also feature prominently in integrated reading methodology. Peer discussion and group work related to reading assignments can greatly enhance understanding. When Uzbek students work together – for instance, in pairs or small groups – to interpret a reading, they can clarify each other’s misunderstandings, share diverse viewpoints, and jointly construct meaning from the text. This process not only improves comprehension but also builds speaking and listening skills as students communicate about the reading. Studies have found that cooperative learning environments boost both reading comprehension and student motivation. In practice, a teacher might organize a “jigsaw” reading activity: each group reads a different text then teaches the key points to classmates, or all groups read the same text and then discuss open-ended questions. Such activities encourage every student to participate and think critically, creating a more interactive reading session than solitary silent reading. They also mimic real-world academic situations, where discussion of literature or research is common.

Another proven strategy is the use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) focused on reading. In TBLT, the teacher assigns a meaningful task that requires comprehension of a text to achieve some outcome. For example, university students might be asked to read several articles on a topic and then engage in a problem-solving task or debate using the information. This was shown to be effective: TBLT-oriented reading tasks (such as summarizing an article’s findings, comparing different authors’ viewpoints, or applying information from a text to solve a case study) compel learners to process texts deeply and use the content actively. By focusing on a concrete outcome beyond just answering comprehension questions, students practice integrated skills—reading to gather information, then writing or speaking to complete the task. TBLT thus naturally integrates reading with productive skills and situates reading in a purposeful context, which increases student engagement.

Finally, the role of extensive reading cannot be overlooked in a modern integrated approach. Extensive reading refers to reading large amounts of text for general understanding and

enjoyment, often at a comfortable difficulty level. This builds reading fluency and confidence. Universities can promote extensive reading by providing access to graded readers or online libraries and by allotting time for sustained silent reading. Some Uzbek institutions have begun to implement extensive reading programs, occasionally using digital libraries to let students choose e-books of interest. Research has consistently shown that extensive reading expands vocabulary and improves overall language proficiency. A literature review in 2024 on upper-intermediate (B2 level) EFL learners concluded that combining extensive reading with focused strategies practice (like inference and summarization exercises) is an optimal way to enhance reading skills. In practical terms, teachers might assign weekly reading outside of class (with a minimal accountability measure such as a brief summary or reading log) while class time is used to discuss favorite readings or teach specific strategies. This blend of independent reading and guided instruction addresses both fluency and skill development.

In sum, modern classroom practices for integrated reading competence emphasize a mix of approaches: direct teaching of reading strategies, integration of reading with writing/speaking tasks, collaborative activities, and encouragement of extensive reading for fluency. These approaches are supported by recent pedagogical research and align well with the needs of Uzbek university students, who must not only understand English texts but also use that understanding in communication. By creating a classroom environment where reading is an interactive, skill-connected, and thought-provoking activity, educators can greatly improve students' reading abilities. Crucially, these traditional strategies can and should complement the use of digital tools, rather than be seen as separate. For example, a teacher might use an online forum for students to discuss a reading (marrying technology with peer discussion), or have students write a blog post (integrating reading, writing, and digital literacy in one project). Such blended methodologies ensure that the development of reading competence is comprehensive and relevant to the modern world.

Conclusion

English reading skills are indispensable for Uzbek students at the university level, and teaching these skills effectively requires a holistic approach that embraces both innovation and established best practices. This article has examined modern methods of teaching reading, highlighting how an integrated skills framework enriches the learning experience. On the one hand, digital tools offer exciting possibilities: e-books with interactive glossaries, online reading platforms with instant feedback, and AI-driven tutors can motivate students and tailor learning to individual needs. Recent studies in 2024–2025 illustrate that technology-enhanced reading instruction can lead to measurable gains in comprehension and engagement. On the other hand, traditional strategies—such as strategy-focused instruction, reading-writing integration, group discussions, and task-based activities—remain fundamental for cultivating deep and transferable reading competence. These methods encourage learners to think critically, communicate about what they read, and apply their reading in various contexts, thereby reinforcing multiple language skills at once.

For educators and curriculum designers in Uzbekistan, the clear implication is that a balanced, integrated approach is most beneficial. Digital resources should be incorporated to complement classroom teaching: for example, teachers might assign readings on an app and then use class

time for discussion and analysis of those readings. Teacher training programs should prepare instructors to use educational technology effectively and to design integrated-skills lessons. At the same time, attention must be given to potential challenges, such as ensuring all students have adequate access to devices and the internet, and guarding against passive over-reliance on technology. Providing guidance on digital literacy and ethical tool use is essential when introducing AI or online platforms into learning .

In conclusion, developing integrated reading skills in EFL learners is a multifaceted endeavor. The latest research underscores that neither innovative technology nor traditional pedagogy alone is a panacea; rather, the synergy of both yields the best results. University educators in Uzbekistan are encouraged to stay informed about emerging digital tools that can enhance reading practice, while also continually applying learner-centered, communicative techniques in the classroom. By doing so, they will help students become not only proficient readers of English but also active, critical thinkers and effective communicators. Such outcomes will empower Uzbek students to fully participate in academic and professional domains where English is key. The ongoing evolution of teaching methods – guided by research and reflective practice – promises to further improve the quality of English education in Uzbekistan, ensuring that graduates possess the reading competence needed for success in the information-rich, interconnected world of today.

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