

## *Original Paper*

# A Practical Research on CET-4 Reading Teaching Based on the Integrated “Teaching-Learning-Assessment” Model at a Private University in Yunnan

Qian Zhang<sup>1\*</sup>, Mengmeng Zhang<sup>1</sup>, & Xinrong Cha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lijiang Culture and Tourism College, Lijiang, Yunnan, 674100, China

<sup>2</sup> West Yunnan University, Lincang, Yunnan, 677000, China

Received: April 12, 2026

Accepted: May 29, 2026

Online Published: June 16, 2026

doi:10.22158/eltls.v8n3p224

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v8n3p224>

### **Abstract**

*Against the predicaments including inadequate English competence among private university students, inefficient preparation for CET-4 reading, and disjointed teaching, learning and assessment in conventional instruction, this study constructs a CET-4 reading teaching framework underpinned by the integrated Teaching-Learning-Assessment (TLA) approach and conducts a five-week instructional intervention. The research subjects consist of 99 students in the experimental group, 725 peers with equivalent proficiency forming the ordinary control group, and another 344 high-proficiency students as the advanced control group. Adopting a quasi-experimental between-group comparison design, the research employs SPSS to implement one-way ANOVA and correlation analysis for effect verification. Statistical results demonstrate that the proposed pedagogy significantly facilitates learners' reading scores; the experimental group presents marginally significant score disparities against the advanced control group. Furthermore, CET-4 reading performance registers a strong positive correlation with overall CET-4 scores, and precise lexical mastery constitutes the core determinant of improving candidates' pass rates. It is verified that the hybrid mode combining embedded formative assessment with authentic past CET-4 test papers matches the academic characteristics of students from private universities, bearing prominent practical value and popularization potential.*

### **Keywords**

*integrated Teaching-Learning-Assessment, CET-4 reading comprehension, private universities in Yunnan*

## 1. Introduction

CET-4 serves as a core instructional objective and quality benchmark for tertiary English teaching at private universities across China. As a high-weighted section strongly predictive of total exam performance, CET-4 reading largely decides students' chances of passing the national test. Traditional reading instruction for CET-4 is plagued by fragmented TLA linkage, ambiguous formative assessment criteria, experience-driven lesson design and delayed evaluative feedback, failing to accommodate the typical learning traits of private university undergraduates: weak linguistic foundations, preference for hands-on drill over theoretical learning. Centered on consistent instructional objectives, the integrated Teaching-Learning-Assessment philosophy advocates in-depth convergence of instruction, student learning and classroom evaluation to boost teaching and learning via targeted assessment. Drawing on the washback effect, this research translates CET-4 reading's official assessment rubrics into operational formative assessment instruments. Rooted in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory and anchored in authentic CET-4 exam papers, the study delivers embedded, whole-process and assessable reading lessons, so as to formulate targeted improvement pathways for CET-4 reading tailored to private university learners.

## 2. Literature Review

The integrated Teaching-Learning-Assessment represents a core educational principle, whose essence lies in the coordinated operation of teaching, learning and assessment revolving around unified instructional goals, clarifying teaching orientation, streamlining learning routes and enabling timely evaluative feedback (Ma, 2022; Zhang, 2022). The American educational psychologist Cohen (1987) put forward the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, aiming to quantify the consistency among curriculum design, classroom implementation and learning outcomes and shift pedagogy from empiricism to objective-driven planning. Based on goal-orientation, Cui and Lei (2015) established the tripartite theoretical framework of TLA alignment, arguing that measurable, attainable and assessable learning objectives lay the groundwork for organic integration of teaching, learning and assessment, facilitating classroom improvement and learner motivation stimulation. From the perspective of core competency cultivation, Wang and Li (2019) systematically introduced this integrated philosophy into English education, elaborating on implementation logic, approaches and merits of synchronized design for teaching objectives, learning tasks and evaluative assignments, laying solid theoretical foundations for English curriculum reform. Empirical researches conducted by Liu and Li (2024) and Zhu (2026) at primary and junior high school levels corroborate that integrated TLA effectively remedies disconnect between teaching goals and in-class activities as well as delayed assessment execution, strengthening the integrity and efficiency of English lessons. Existing literature reveals that domestic researches on integrated TLA concentrate predominantly on primary and secondary English education, with scarce applications in tertiary English instruction, let alone empirical studies focusing exclusively on CET-4 reading courses for private university students; localized operational frameworks remain insufficient to

satisfy institutional learning realities (Lei, 2025; Liu & Li, 2024; Yan, 2021; Zhu, 2026). The synergy of formative and summative assessment acts as a linchpin for grounded implementation of integrated TLA. Centered on learning progression, formative assessment tracks individual development through in-class observation, task accomplishment, peer review and routine homework, prioritizing instant feedback on learner engagement, progress and existing deficiencies. In contrast, summative assessment targets final academic attainment, with the official CET-4 examination as a typical instantiation (Coffey & Leung, 2012; Poehner, 2007). Traditional pedagogy keeps the two assessment modalities isolated: formative evaluation lacks standardized benchmarks and relies excessively on instructors' subjective experience, sacrificing validity and stability; meanwhile, summative exam results rarely feed back into ongoing classroom practice, triggering disconnection between teaching and evaluation as well as detachment between daily learning and formal testing. Scholars including Leung (2004, 2007) and Black and Wiliam (2009) contended that converting well-validated summative testing criteria into formative assessment tools standardizes in-process evaluation and upgrades its diagnostic value (Chapelle, 2003). As a standardized large-scale domestic language proficiency test with robust reliability and validity, CET-4 specifies clear proposition logic, exam focus and competence requirements for its reading subsection, which can be directly referenced to frame teaching objectives and classroom evaluation criteria. Embedding CET-4 reading assessment standards into routine formative assessment and adopting authentic exam papers as learning and testing materials enables targeted alignment between daily tuition and official exam requirements, helping learners self-evaluate their proficiency and ultimately realize assessment-promoted instruction, learning and pedagogical revision (McMillan, 2003). To sum up, prior scholarship has theoretically validated the instructional merits of integrated TLA, formative assessment, ZPD and test washback effect, yet few empirical projects synthesize such theories into CET-4 reading teaching for private university undergraduates. To fill this research gap, the present study builds a replicable, operable and promotable reading teaching model with authentic CET-4 papers as core resources, embedded formative assessment as implementation measure and scaffolded tiered instruction as pedagogical support, so as to enrich relevant empirical evidence and elevate CET-4 reading teaching quality for private tertiary institutions.

### **3. Teaching Practice**

Instructional Implementation Cases Centered on authentic past CET-4 reading papers and supported by formative assessment, three progressive instructional modules are devised: targeted lexical precision quizzes, test-oriented reading skill lectures and timed exam simulation drills, complying with official CET-4 syllabus and matching private university students' learning features.

Lexical Assessment Session Lexical competence constitutes the core breakthrough point of the whole intervention. Quiz bank draws from high-frequency confusing core vocabularies extracted from authentic CET-4 reading passages, selecting 10 commonly misspelled words featuring confusing pronunciation, spelling and semantic correspondence. A three-tier evaluation mechanism comprising

self-assessment, peer assessment and teacher scoring is adopted to realize integrated testing, error diagnosis and consolidated memorization. Targeting learners' common pitfalls including incorrect lexical recognition and frequent spelling mistakes, blank-filling tasks with underlined error-prone letters are adopted to sharpen students' awareness of lexical details and encourage active error correction. Teachers conduct on-site data statistics, error analysis, instant feedback and consolidation after each quiz, translating evaluative outcomes into targeted remedial learning arrangements and exerting the real-time diagnostic strength of formative assessment.

Reading Skill Lectures and Follow-up Practices Command of problem-solving skills accelerates students' reading speed and accuracy. Conventional skill-based teaching overemphasizes abstract theoretical elaboration, which proves obscure and hard to memorize for private university learners. In this research, instructors refine CET-4 proposition rules, question types and solution logic, simplifying abstract theories into digestible formulas, mnemonic rhymes and actionable operational steps for easy memorization and application. All theoretical elaboration is contextualized within authentic CET-4 reading excerpts, clarifying applicable question categories, information positioning techniques, judgement principles and wrong-option elimination strategies for each problem-solving skill. In-class micro-drills follow immediately after every knowledge point for instant mastery inspection and intensive remediation of recurring errors; after-class exam-paper assignments facilitate internalization of learned strategies, guiding students from passive comprehension to flexible application and stable problem-solving capability formation.

Timed Reading Simulation Training Time management competence is essential for high CET-4 reading scores. Most private university examinees suffer from slow reading pace, unreasonable time allocation and maladaptive exam rhythm. Following the official 40-minute time limit for CET-4 reading, tiered timed drills based on authentic test papers are arranged in ascending difficulty: from short single-task exercises to mixed-type training and full-set mock exams, gradually boosting reading speed and test-taking resilience. The three-phase training design is specified as follows: Phase One: separate timed drills for Banked Cloze, Long Passage Matching and Careful Reading respectively to strengthen genre awareness and information location efficiency; Phase Two: combined training of mixed question types to cultivate flexible time allocation and strategic adjustment; Phase Three: full-length simulated examination replicating official exam environment, time constraint and procedural norms to help students adapt to standardized test rhythm.

**Table Reading Scores in the Second Semester in 2025**

Class	M	SD	Variance	Min	Max
Experimental Class	139.99	28.641	820.296	0	210
Same Level Control Class	139.32	28.946	837.856	0	215

High Level Control Class	145.56	28.969	839.175	0	200
Overall	141.23	29.039	843.262	0	215

## ANOVA Analysis

Dependent

Variable:

Reading

## LSD

(I) Class	(J) Class	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Experimental Class	Same-level Control Group	0.671	3.102	0.829	-5.42		6.76
	High-level Control Group	-5.565	3.299	0.092	-12.04		0.91
Same-level Control Group	Experimental Class	-0.671	3.102	0.829	-6.76		5.42
	High-level Control Group	-6.236*	1.899	0.01	-9.96		-2.51
High-level Control Group	Experimental Class	5.565	3.299	0.092	-0.91		12.04
	Same-level Control Group	6.236*	1.899	0.01	2.51		9.96

## Correlation Analysis

		CET-4Total	Listening	Reading	Writing & Translation
College Entrance English	Pearson Correlation	.263**	.195**	.256**	.235**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0
CET-4Total	Pearson Correlation		.836**	.891**	.871**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0

#### 4. Teaching Effect Analysis

One-way ANOVA taking group as independent variable and reading score as dependent variable reveals statistically significant inter-group discrepancy:  $F(2, 1165)=4.82$ ,  $p=0.008$ ,  $\eta^2=0.008$ . Subsequent LSD multiple comparison demonstrates non-significant score gap between experimental

group and equivalent-proficiency control group ( $p>0.05$ ); the ordinary control group scores significantly lower than advanced learners ( $p<0.01$ ); marginally significant difference exists between experimental cohort and high-level controls ( $p=0.092$ ). Restricted by the short intervention cycle (5 weeks, 15 class hours  $\times$  45 mins per period), the intervention fails to generate dramatic score promotion, yet the experimental class approximates advanced controls statistically, proving the pedagogy effective and promotable. Correlation analysis manifests significant positive correlation between candidates' Gaokao English results and final CET-4 performance ( $r=0.263$ ). CET-4 reading obtains extremely high correlation with overall exam score at  $r=0.891$ , implying reading achievement serves as a robust predictor of total CET-4 mark; failing to reach reading cutoff largely results in overall exam failure. After Z-score transformation of Gaokao and CET-4 scores, paired-samples T-test detects no statistically meaningful discrepancy, which proves learners' inherent linguistic proficiency remains relatively stable and short-term instruction cannot substantially upgrade holistic language aptitude. Accordingly, systematic lexical consolidation targeting accurate pronunciation-spelling-meaning matching becomes the priority to lift institutional CET-4 pass rates.

## 5. Conclusion

Targeting Yunnan private university undergraduates' prominent drawbacks including poor foundational English, deficient lexical precision and preference for practical learning over theoretical input, this research constructs a three-layer Objective-Implementation-Empowerment reading teaching model by integrating standardized CET-4 summative evaluation criteria into whole-process embedded formative assessment, with a five-week 15-period teaching intervention delivered to 99 experimental participants, alongside 725 equivalent-proficiency and 344 high-proficiency control students. Based on SPSS-derived ANOVA and correlation statistics, although short-duration intervention cannot trigger statistically conspicuous score elevation, marginal significance between experimental and advanced control groups verifies the rationality and spreading value of the proposed integrated TLA pedagogy. Besides, the strong correlation between reading subsection and total CET-4 score confirms reading as the decisive module of overall exam pass. Empirical outcomes highlight precise lexical mastery as the cornerstone of sustainable linguistic improvement; long-run systematic lexical drilling is indispensable to consolidate sound-spelling-semantic correspondence given limited short-term instructional effectiveness on innate language foundations, accompanied by persistent cultivation of learning motivation and autonomous learning capacity. Authentic CET-4 papers with authoritative reliability and validity can be multiplexed as learning resources, diagnostic tests and evaluative benchmarks, supporting students' self-positioning of proficiency level and instructors' differentiated instruction design based on accurate cohort diagnosis. Running through full procedures of academic diagnosis, lesson planning, consolidation drills and targeted revision, embedded formative assessment empowers teachers to enact scaffolding instruction and dynamically adjust teaching schedules for virtuous cyclic advancement of teaching and learning. In conclusion, the integrated TLA-based CET-4 reading

pedagogy effectively eliminates persistent drawbacks of conventional reading lessons such as disjointed TLA links, ambiguous evaluation benchmarks, delayed feedback and empiricism-dominated teaching, fitting perfectly with private universities' CET-4 preparation demands and student learning characteristics with solid operability and pertinence. Future researches can prolong intervention cycles, expand sample pool, launch long-term longitudinal tracking and extend pedagogical design to other CET-4 subsections, further optimizing the instructional framework and providing systematic empirical references for private tertiary English teaching reform and pass-rate improvement across Yunnan Province.

## References

- Alderson, J. C., & Wall, D. (1992). Does washback exist?. *Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 153-169.
- Alquahtani, F. (2021). The impact of language testing washback in promoting teaching and learning processes: A theoretical review. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(7), 21-26.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2003). Developing the theory of formative assessment. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21(1), 5-31.
- Bu, J. M. (2025). Research on Vocational Undergraduate English Reading Assessment Based on China's Standards of English Language Ability. *Foreign Language Testing and Teaching*, 2025(4), 45-56.
- Chapelle, C. A. (2003). Validity in language assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 2003(23), 95-114.
- Coffey, S. J., & Leung, C. (2012). Current issues in english language teacher-based assessment. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(3), 393-415.
- Cohen, S. A. (1987). Instructional alignment: Searching for a magic bullet. *Educational Researcher*, 16(8), 16-19.
- Cui, Y. H., & Lei, H. (2015). Construction of the Tripartite Theoretical Model for Alignment of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. *Journal of East China Normal University (Educational Sciences)*, 2015(4), 15-22.
- Green, A. (2006). Washback to the learner: Learner and teacher perspectives on IELTS preparation course expectations and outcomes. *Assessing Writing*, 11(2), 113-134.
- Jiang, C. (2026). Data-driven Integrated TLA Practice for Grade Seven English Based on Academic Quality Monitoring. *English Teachers*, 2026(2), 9-15.
- Lei, W. R. (2025). Implementation Strategies of Formative Assessment in Foreign Language Teaching at Universities. *Journal of Changchun University*, 35(6), 100-108.
- Leung, C. (2004). Developing formative teacher assessment: Knowledge, practice, and change. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 1(1), 19-41.
- Leung, C. (2007). Dynamic assessment: Assessment for and as teaching?. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 4(3), 257-278.

- Li, B. R. (2016). Contents and Approaches of Academic Situation Analysis in English Teaching. *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools(Middle School)*, 2016(5), 42-47.
- Li, Q. H., & Kong, S. (2025). Literature Review on Validity Research of China's Standards of English Language Ability. *Journal of Beijing International Studies University*, 2025(3), 32-45.
- Litt, E. (2012). Knock, knock. who's there? the imagined audience. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56(3), 330-345.
- Liu, Q., & Li, H. (2024). Integrated Unit Teaching in Primary English under Integrated TLA: A Case Study of Unit3 My Friends. *English Teachers*, 24(20), 65-71.
- Lou, J., & Yu, X. Q. (2024). Correlational Research on Second Language Vocabulary Size, Word Frequency and Receptive Collocation Knowledge. *Journal of Beijing International Studies University*, 2024(5), 131-143.
- Ma, Y. H. (2022). Research on Alignment of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Junior High English Listening & Speaking: A Case of Unit6 Section A 1a-2c. *English Teachers*, 22(1), 98-114.
- McMillan, J. H. (2003). Understanding and improving teachers' classroom assessment decision making: Implications for theory and practice. *Educational Measurement Issues & Practice*, 22(4), 34-43.
- National CET Committee. (2016). *National College English Test Band 4 & Band 6 Syllabus (Revised 2016)*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Pang, Y. K. (2012). Common Errors and Countermeasures in Student Academic Analysis. *Education and Teaching*, 2012(10), 27-29.
- Poehner, M. E. (2007). Beyond the test: L2 dynamic assessment and the transcendence of mediated learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(3), 323-340.
- Spratt, M. (2005). Washback and the classroom: The implications for teaching and learning of washback from exam. *Language Teaching Research*, 9(1), 5-29.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wang, Q., & Li, L. (2019). Promoting Integrated Teaching-Learning-Assessment in Core Competency-oriented English Classroom: Connotation, Theory and Implementation. *Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method*, 2019(11), 45-52.
- Wang, X. Q., & Liu, J. D. (2025). Graded Wordlist Compilation Grounded on China's Standards of English Language Ability. *Modern Foreign Languages*, 49(2), 241-251.
- Wei, G. (2023). Zone of Proximal Development: Theoretical Origin, Core Connotation and Educational Value. *Journal of Hangzhou Normal University(Social Sciences Edition)*, 2023(5), 66-76.
- Wilkins, D. A. (n.d.). *Linguistics in language teaching*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Wu, L., & Qiu, W. Y. (2014). Reinterpreting Student Academic Situation Analysis. *People's Education*, 2014(12), 44-47.
- Wu, S. (2025). Application Research of China's Standards of English Language Ability in National English Proficiency Test: Taking PETS as an Example. *Foreign Language World*, 2025(6), 1-10.

- Wu, S. (2025). Validity Verification of Newly Added Scales in 2024 Revised China's Standards of English Language Ability. *Modern Foreign Languages*, 48(4), 525-535.
- Xia, Y. F. (2021). Improving Young Teachers' English Reading Classroom Efficiency via Integrated TLA: A Case of Unit1 Television Period1. *English Teachers*, 21(3), 181-185.
- Zhang, X. Y. (2022). Reading-Writing Integrated Junior High English Teaching Based on Integrated TLA. *English Teachers*, 2022(12), 98-102.
- Zhu, X. (2026). Holistic Unit Teaching for Junior High English with Integrated TLA. *English Teachers*, 26(5), 181-184.