

# Connected Papers as an AI-Assisted Learning Tool in Teaching Evaluative Reading

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Using an Artificial Intelligent (AI) like Connected Papers is important for evaluative reading because it helps EFL undergraduate students see how academic texts are related, instead of reading each article in isolation. Evaluative reading requires judging a text's reliability, relevance, and contribution to a field. When students can visualize which papers are central, which are more recent, and how ideas are connected, they are better able to question, compare, and assess sources which are fundamental components of evaluative reading (Al-hawamdeh, 2025; Busarakham Intasuk, 2024; Noori, 2025).

Many EFL learners struggle not only with reading comprehension but also with evaluative reading skills such as analyzing arguments, evaluating evidence, and synthesizing information across texts (Chaiya & Jarunthawatchai, 2025; Kaban, Ayşegül Liman; Karadeniz, 2021). Research shows that instruction which pushes students beyond literal understanding such as through projects, problem-

based tasks, and critical reading activities significantly enhance both reading comprehension and critical thinking (Hasbi, 2017; Kaowiwattanakul, 2021). A connected-papers environment supports this by giving students multiple related texts to examine, compare, and critique rather than a single, decontextualized reading.

Connected Papers is a visual literature exploration tool that helps users find and understand relationships among academic articles. It works by asking the user to choose an “origin paper,” then analyzing tens of thousands of publications to build a graph of related papers based on co-citation and bibliographic coupling similarities (Behera et al., 2023; Kaur, A., Sharma, R., Mishra, P., Sinhababu, A., & Chakravarty, 2022). Previous studies found that connected papers is highly valued for visually mapping papers and revealing connections, and many use it for educational purposes and literature reviews, reporting that it improves efficiency compared with traditional tools like Google Scholar and Scopus, despite some navigation challenges (Kaur et al., 2022).

## **2. DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study highlight the potential of Connected Papers as an Artificial Intelligent (AI) assisted learning tool in facilitating evaluative reading among EFL undergraduate students. This section discusses The Nature and Need of Evaluative Reading, The Role of Connected Papers in Facilitating Evaluative Reading, and Challenges in The Implementation of Connected Papers for Teaching Evaluative Reading.

### **2.1 The Nature and Need of Evaluative Reading**

Evaluative reading is a level of reading where learners assess, criticize, and respond to what they read, not just understand it. It focuses on judging the truth, logic, value, and bias of a text; students decide whether arguments are strong, evidence is reliable, and ideas are relevant for themselves or their community (Aini et al., 2025). It involves skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, going

beyond “getting the meaning” to questioning and judging the text (Javorčíková et al., 2021).

The needs analysis reveals that students in the context of English as a Foreign Language still face significant challenges in developing evaluative reading skills. Most students tend to focus on basic level comprehension, such as identifying main ideas and understanding vocabulary, rather than critically analyzing and evaluating texts. Consequently, their capacity to appraise arguments, identify bias, and synthesize information across multiple sources is still constrained.

These difficulties are further compounded by linguistic barriers, including limited academic vocabulary and unfamiliarity with complex discourse structures. Moreover, many students have few opportunities to engage with multiple, thematically related texts, even though such exposure is crucial for the development of evaluative reading skills. This indicates a need for more instructional approaches that promote intertextual and critical reading practices. To address these gaps, teaching should intentionally foster higher-order thinking skills, as articulated in Bloom’s Taxonomy, and integrate tools like Connected Papers to facilitate the exploration of related literature. Overall, students require guided instruction and structured support to develop into critical and independent readers.

## **2.2 The Role of Connected Papers in Facilitating Evaluative Reading**

Connected Papers facilitates evaluative reading by enabling students to engage with academic texts in a structured, visual, and critical way. It allows learners to move beyond linear reading practices by presenting interconnected studies, thereby supporting the identification of key sources, the comparison of diverse perspectives, and a deeper understanding of the development of ideas within a particular research domain. This process contributes to the enhancement of higher-order thinking skills, particularly analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

The integration of digital tools in reading instruction can foster not only linguistic competence but also digital literacy, which is

essential in contemporary academic contexts. Through such integration, students are encouraged to develop greater learner autonomy, enabling them to independently explore, select, and critically evaluate relevant academic sources. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these tools is not inherently guaranteed. It necessitates careful instructional design, adequate scaffolding, and sustained pedagogical guidance to ensure their meaningful and effective use in the learning process.

The facilitative role of Connected Papers is not entirely independent of pedagogical support. The effectiveness of the tool depends largely on how it is integrated into classroom instruction. Without proper guidance, students may struggle to interpret the visual network or may focus only on surface features, such as selecting articles without critically engaging with their content. Therefore, instructors play a crucial role in scaffolding students' learning by providing clear instructions, modeling evaluative reading strategies, and designing tasks that require critical engagement with multiple sources.

### **2.3 The Implementation of Connected Papers in Teaching Evaluative Reading**

The following are the steps for implementing Connected Papers in teaching evaluative reading:

#### *Pre-Reading Stage*

At this stage, the lecturer introduces Connected Papers and explains its purpose in supporting evaluative reading. Students are guided to understand the learning objectives and are provided with a seed paper related to the topic. The lecturer demonstrates how to use this artificial intelligent through video tutorial to ensure students are familiar with its features. A brief discussion of the seed paper is conducted to activate students' prior knowledge, followed by prompting students to predict what they might discover from related studies. After that, students are guided to access Connected Papers, generate the research network, and observe the relationships among the articles.

### *Whilst-Reading Stage*

During this stage, students explore the generated network and select relevant articles for reading, either individually or in pairs. They engage in evaluative reading by identifying the main arguments, examining the evidence, and assessing the credibility and relevance of each source. To support this process, students may complete structured worksheets that guide them in analyzing key aspects such as methodology and findings. In addition, they are encouraged to compare two or more articles to identify similarities and differences, evaluate the reliability of sources based on criteria such as publication and authorship, and take organized notes while highlighting important information.

### *Post-Reading Stage*

In the final stage, students synthesize the information gathered from multiple sources. They participate in discussions to share and justify their evaluations, followed by reflective activities to enhance their understanding. As a follow-up, students complete tasks such as writing a critical response, preparing a summary, or presenting their findings. This stage reinforces evaluative reading skills and promotes deeper learning.

## **3. FUTURE DIRECTION**

The integration of Artificial Intelligent (AI)-assisted tools such as Connected Papers in teaching evaluative reading offers both opportunities and challenges. Research indicates that Artificial Intelligent (AI) can enhance learning outcomes, engagement, and higher-order thinking skills by helping students navigate complex academic texts and access interconnected sources more efficiently (Hasbi, 2025). These features support students in comparing perspectives, identifying key arguments, and synthesizing information. It is supported by Mayer that technology can enhance learning when integrated effectively (Mayer, 2009). On the other hand, there is concern that students may rely too much on Artificial Intelligent (AI), which can reduce their ability to think critically on their own (Hasbi et al., 2024). This aligns with the principles of Zhai et

al that overreliance on AI systems may negatively affect students' critical thinking, as learners tend to accept AI-generated responses without engaging in deeper analytical processes (Zhai et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of Artificial Intelligent (AI) depends on proper instructional guidance, as students need support to interpret connections and engage critically with the content. Overall, Connected Papers serves as a valuable pedagogical tool that enhances evaluative reading when integrated with appropriate teaching strategies.

### Author



**Linda Septyana** is a lecturer in English Language Education at Universitas Islam Negeri Jurai Siwo Lampung. Over the past five years, her academic work has focused on teaching reading comprehension and integrating Islamic values into English language learning. She has authored several publications, including works on teaching English through short Islamic stories, genre-based approaches in reading instruction for Islamic university students, as well as materials on literal and inferential reading. She has also contributed to the development of Jurai Siwo E-Magz as a supplementary reading resource.

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