Empowering Academic Reading: strategies for student engagement in the digital age

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“We cannot assume that print-based literacy always gives us the best tools with which to read; in many ways, what digital reading allows us to do is rethink, reconsider, and expand upon the reading practices that we may have taken for granted.”


https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/herts/detail.action?docID=6551350
5 Cs Framework to promote deep reading practices

1. Curation
2. Connection
3. Creativity
4. Contextualisation
5. Contemplation
Creativity

“Creativity refers to a reader’s ability to apply an idea from a reading and create something new as a result.” p.132
Introducing the activity to students: annotation activity

Frame the activity with discussion of what social annotation is, why it may be useful, their previous experience, and establish respectful etiquette.

Show an example – marginalia in a book, annotated pdf

Ask students to complete a certain number of notes within the shared annotation platform

Questions to guide and prompt their annotations may include:
• Which parts of the reading were the most interesting to you? Write an annotation based on the parts that stood out the most.
• Which section of the reading did you have a question about or not understand? Note the section either with a pointed question or simply a statement (e.g., “I’m not sure what this section means exactly.”)
• Which part of the reading surprised you? Where did you learn something new? Why did it surprise you?
• Which part of the reading connected with something you learned in class or earlier in the term?
• How did that section reinforce or advance what you had learned in class?

View all annotations to notice patterns, differences in understanding or interest etc.
Example of social annotation: Talis Elevate

Parliamentary Report on Environmental Impact of Microplastics
House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. Fourth Report of Session 2016-17

means their influence in that process will be significantly reduced. Nonetheless, we recommend that the Government bring forward its own legislative ban, and align it as closely as possible with international measures.

Despite the commitment by a section of the cosmetics industry to phase out microbeads, we found a reluctance to talk publicly about the issue from large cosmetics manufacturers, and we found a lack of consistency in their approach. Therefore, we call on the Government to ban microbeads in the cosmetics industry, we believe this will level the playing field, and urge the Government to move swiftly towards implementation.

Microbeads are part of the wider issue of microplastic pollution. The small size of microplastics means that they can be ingested by marine life and have the potential to transfer chemicals to and from the marine environment. There is evidence of ecological damage resulting from this. If someone eats six oysters, it is likely they will have eaten 50 particles of microplastics. This is still a relatively new research area and subject to uncertainties. Relatively little research has been done so far either on potential impacts to human health or the marine economy. We recommend that the Government draw up a research strategy to assessing and mitigating microplastic pollution for the next round of research funding. Human health impacts should be a priority subject for research, along with examining ways to reduce microplastic pollution from consumer goods, such as synthetic fibres and tyres, and industrial processes, such as sandblasting.
Case study – Creativity (Social Annotation activity)

What did I do?

• Embedded **Talis Elevate for specific reading** (and other module content including recorded lecture) on L6 criminology module (War Crimes)

• Access to an ‘on-boarding’ videos and created a practice activity for students to learn how to use the tool effectively

• Added a question or comment within reading for students to respond to

• Encouraged students to make their own notes within the tool

What was the impact?

Works well as synchronous or asynchronous activity to be fully inclusive and give all students opportunity to engage, provokes curiosity.

Students gain a sense of collaboration and creating a discussion, in curating and collecting ideas.

Students can share their own life/work experiences in context of the reading – diverse voice.
Contemplation

“Contemplation refers both to readers’ abilities to allocate attentional resources appropriately and to articulate a clear vision for why they are reading in the first place.” p.134
Introducing the activity to students: 3-2-1

Revisit your reading for week/unit...

Identify in your reading:

• 3 interesting moments – submit these quotes into a document/discussion board and record why these were interesting to you

• 2 confusing moments – what was challenging in this part of the text? What confused you?

• 1 open question – imagine you can ask the author to expand on a relevant point. What would you ask? What do you want to know more about?

Share your question with the person next to you / on a Padlet / discussion board
Case study – Contemplation using 3-2-1 activity

Becky’s interesting moments from the webinar
1. People don’t treat the concepts of failure and success in the same way. Success is not an absolute value.
2. Success and failure on a spectrum and always co-exist.
3. Everybody wants someone else to be the first to acknowledge failure. It is not an easy thing to do. It takes trust and humility.

The same issues around failure can exist in healthcare. But in healthcare, there are others in place to learn from failures. Healthcare professionals have a moral duty. We also have a moral duty as librarians if we wish to have a safer society.

Jane’s interesting moment from the article
1. Introducing new services as a pilot or trial is a less risky way of being innovative. If they are not successful (and fail) they can be withdrawn more easily. I have often viewed a pilot as non-commitment from the organisation.
2. Honesty even in a ‘safe’ space didn’t receive acknowledgement of failure.
3. Absence of narrative of failures provides incomplete narrative of the success. Usually after our skills sessions we know what might have failed and adapt sessions for next time, but how often do we openly reflect and review our wider collaborative work?

Haylee’s confusing moments
1. When success is tied to funding and payment people.

Haylee’s confusing moments
1. Why is it that some projects are seen more valuable than others? Within LUL it is hard to

Becky’s moments
1. I acknowledge my failure to be confused. I did not feel confused during the webinar or the reading. Perhaps, I failed to choose a challenging enough reading for the webinar out.

In my moments: For us to control the narrative of failure to be acknowledged.
1. Our society seems unforgiving of mistakes (british cancel culture). Social media makes the world feel very binary. I’m thinking about EUA and how uncomfortable I felt to voice an opinion about it being hosted in Dublin.
2. I learn best when I do mistakes or learn from others’ mistakes. I think Jane and I need to acknowledge at UH the lack of contact from staff about these activities and therefore not knowing even if they have even tried to implement them. Our current exposure to online workaround is falling.

Jane’s moments
1. At UH we often address ‘failures’ in terms of what could have worked better. Would it be more effective to name them as failures, encouraging the more positive aspect of falling? To quote Thomas Edison “I have not failed. I’ve successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work.” (Carron, 2022)

Haylee’s moments
1. Following up on my confusing moment #2, if things can shift depending on the perspective, how can we account for that? How can we possibly acknowledge every single perspective and identity?

Louise’s moments
1. Do we need to protect ‘empty’ time in our working week for reflection and planning? Or should it at least be encouraged?

I try to leave space for this, but it often gets copped into by last minute meetings, appointments or teaching sessions. Is it ok to push back? It could be seen as a failure to do so. I’m not providing a service or expertise at a point of need. But it could also be a success in that in order to provide valuable information I need that time to breathe, to think and reflect on my own practices and learn about newer more relevant ways of doing things. Bringing it back to my first comment under ‘Interesting moments’: in order for libraries to move on we must remain relevant – this requires time.
Challenges

• Positive staff engagement during sessions, reflected in feedback forms:
  • “This was a very useful session, particularly as I was able to discuss some of the strategies openly and in a convivial, safe space. I will be recommending this session to colleagues.”
  • “It was brilliant and should really help people develop their approach to designing not just their reading lists, but also the overall curriculum.”
• Difficulty in obtaining real-world case studies
• Misalignment of terminology and selected readings
Key takeaway

We can strengthen student engagement with academic reading through purposeful learning strategies.
References for further reading


