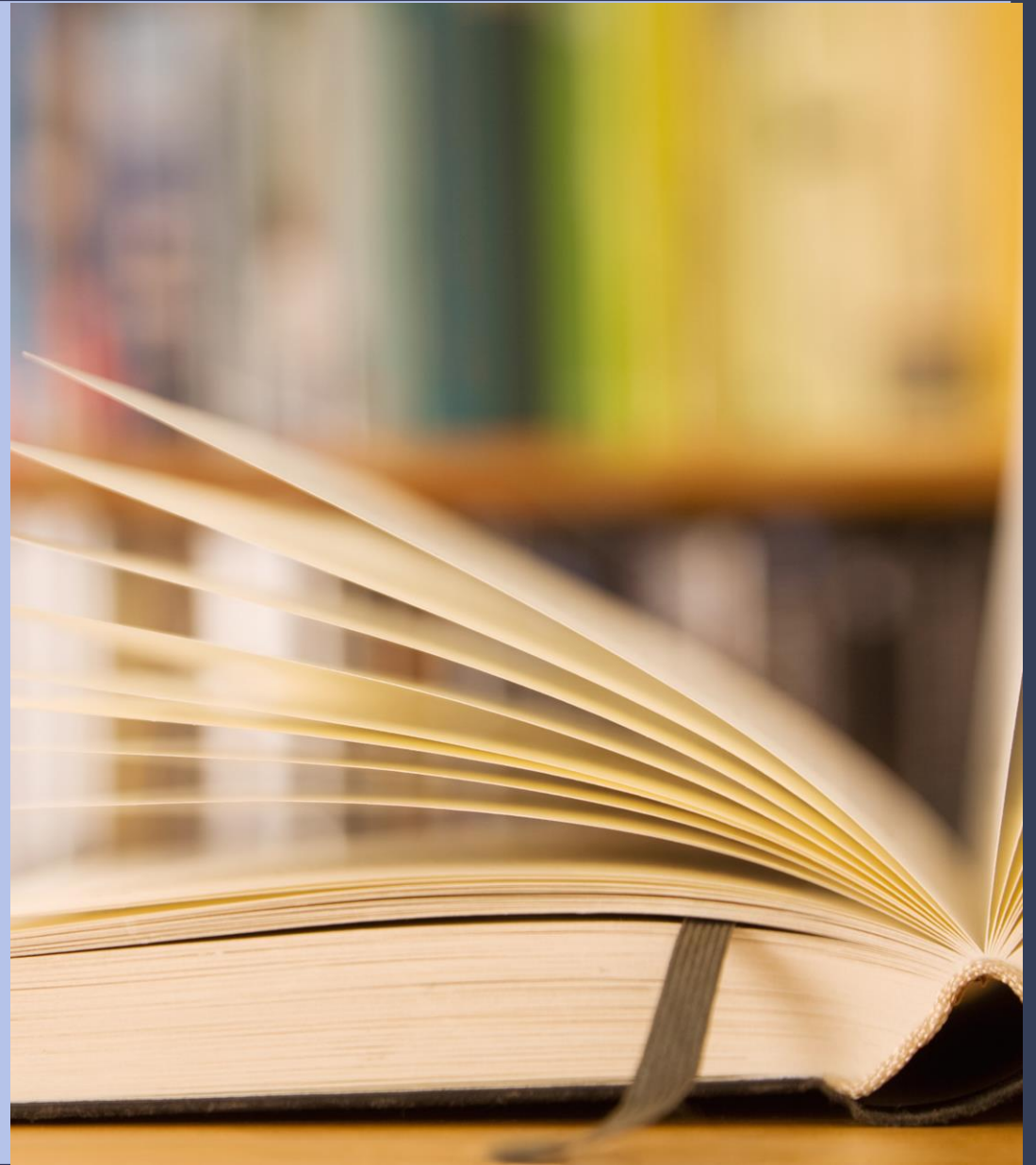# Reading Circles:
Equipping and Motivating Students to Develop Their Academic Reading Skills

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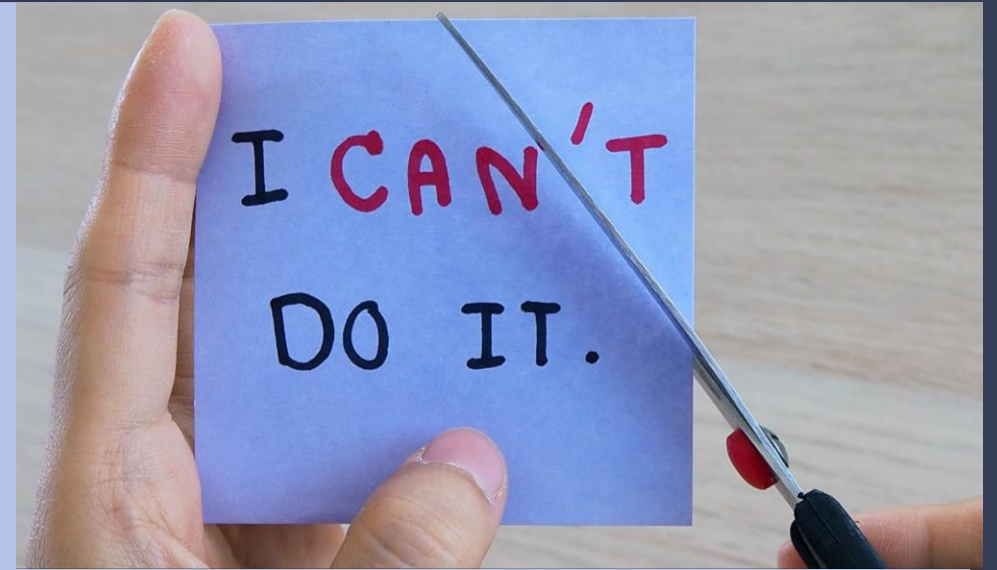
School of Education

My Teaching Experiences:

- Student confidence.

- Student understanding.

- Views on academic articles.

- Source preferences.

How does the use of reading circles in seminars help to develop student confidence when reading and using academic articles for assignments?

What does the literature say?

- Assumed that students already know how to read academically before they attend university (Erickson et al, 2006).

- Lecturers have found a lack of confidence reading academic articles and that students don't want to read complex literature (Miller and Merdian, 2020).

- Academic reading is described as reading a text from a HE setting or a peer reviewed text, as "the process of engagement with the literature", such as how they critically analyse or understand the text, and as a task to help develop understanding of a topic, reflective practices, and professional development (Miller et al, 2020:6).

- "Reading an academic text does not simply involve finding information on the text itself. Rather it is a process of working with the text", looking at how students will convey the argument of the text (Hermida, 2009:23).

- Reading circles allow others to develop a deeper understanding of academic sources (Hermida, 2009).

Intervention:

- A week before the seminar they were provided with the reading log and article to read.

- Additional questions were created and added to each reading logs.

- Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978).

- Active learning and the Online Engagement Framework for Higher Education (Redmond et al, 2018).

- In the seminars they would discuss the findings in groups.

- Lecturer acted as a guide, guiding and encouraging discussions.

READING LOG: Use this document to record your responses to the text you were asked to read this week.

Title: Embracing Complexity: Rethinking the Relation Between Play and Learning: Comment on Lillard et al. (2013)	**Date:** 16/02/2024

Who wrote this piece?
When?
Where?

What is it about?

Why:
- was it written?
- is it relevant to this module?
- is the author credible, or not?

How:
- is it written? (Formal or informal style. First, second or third person)
- might it be useful to you or others?
- did it change or confirm any of your own ideas?

So what? Is it any good? Your own overall opinion of this text

Vocabulary:
Words/phrases that were new to me: Meaning:

Additional Questions:
- How can research related to play ethos be tainted by bias?
- Why do we need to move away from traditional methods of studying pretend play?
- Is play an epiphenomenon or is play related to learning?

Evaluation of the intervention:

Surveys:

- Surveys before the intervention began and afterwards.

- Before- confidence and use of articles.

- After- confidence, use of articles, and the effectiveness of the reading logs.

Data comparison:

- Marks from a similar assignment from a different module in semester 1 will be compared with the marks from their first assignment in this module.

Findings from the surveys:

- Confidence levels before the reading circles were low.

- Attitudes towards articles were low.

- These increased afterwards:

  - Most of the students reported a neutral (36.4%) or negative attitude (36.4%), with only 27.3% feeling a positive or very positive attitude towards academic articles.

  - After the RCs intervention, most stated neutral (40%) or positive (40%) attitude.

- Some students already had the confidence to use articles but understood the content better after the reading circles.

- Some students would use the reading logs in the future.

Findings from the data comparison:

- The first survey found that students tend to use a range of articles in their assignments:

    - 72.7% stated that they always use academic articles.

    - In the second survey there was a 25.4% increase in the statement of the number of articles used.

- There was an increase in article use in their first assignment, but these results were mixed.

    - 19 students increased their article usage by an average of 3 articles.

    - Some used less sources, but a good amount for the content of their assignment.

    - Some students used a low amount, didn't improve, or didn't submit anything.

Changes:

- More appealing to students who do not want to write long notes- illustrations.

- Every two weeks rather than every week.

- Reading circles in lectures instead.

- Why do reading circles work???

Questions?