



The Reality of Reading: An exploration of the reading practices of undergraduate students

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Purpose of study

- To investigate the attitudes and practices of undergraduate students to reading; their reading behaviour; preferences and how this links to their engagement and development of academic literacies.
- To understand students reading preferences of digital or paper based texts
- To explore what strategies students use to develop understanding and critical thinking
- To inform our approaches to delivery and resources we utilise to enhance learning.

Findings – themes

- Importance of learning spaces
- Access to texts, both digital and paper
- Teaching of reading strategies
- Preferences for digital or paper texts
- Confidence for different types of texts accessed at different levels

Summary of data analysis

- when asked what media they prefer to read on 78.3% preferred paper, 17.4% on screen, the remainder on e-reader
- the preference for texts was books, then journals – they felt that books had a lot more information, they liked to have the text in their hands, books are often written more simply and are easier to read, easier to revisit information and ‘having a physical copy of what you are reading as it somehow becomes easier to understand’
- some felt that textbooks provide the context of the subject and articles are useful for research- this also linked to confidence to access these
- ‘journals because they are easier to read as they are shorter’, others also felt that they were more up to date, more accessible being online, provided recent research, involved a study and a summary of the key points- the structure and format of them helped

- 'prefer online reading for shorter stuff, a summary, just to get the idea of a topic but if it's a long or more difficult text I prefer the physical copy for highlighting and making my own notes on'
- Different strategies highlighted for digital or paper based reading and the links this has to note taking, understanding the text and organising information
- Strategies used by staff to support and develop reading skills were identified including how to prioritise reading and modelling how to read different texts

Impact/ planned outputs

- Module leaders on course have used this to develop support with reading
- Linked with multimedia team to develop either animation or screen shot to highlight strategies for students and one for staff
- Dissemination of strategies and findings through CPD workshop
- Links with library