

## Engaging first year biomedical students with scientific literature via the innovative Perusall online reading platform

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First year students at Victoria University undertake introductory Biology units for biomedical courses in the VU Block Model®. Developing the students' critical reading skills is paramount, as it directly aligns with learning outcomes and assessments. Traditionally, hard copies of scientific articles or PDFs via VU collaborate LMS were provided to the students. The quality of assessment submissions illustrated that students did not engage sufficiently with the literature.

Perusall online reading platform incorporates a novel e-book reader with collaborative annotation tools and builds peer social connections (Li and Li, 2023, Miller et al., 2018). A designated reading library was created on Perusall with targeted scientific literature consisting of original research and review articles. A total of 494 students joined our Perusall library, with 79.1% of them engaging with a paper. On average, students spent 15 minutes interacting with the content.

Students reflected on their reading and asynchronously engaged to clarify their understanding as teaching staff encouraged students to critically read and annotate sections of the article. Perusall enabled students to further comment on or answer their peer's questions. The improvement in student engagement was clearly evident in students connecting and learning from each other via Perusall and taking ownership of their learning.

Using live interaction features, workshop participants will gain hands-on experience in using the Perusall platform.

### References

- Li, M., Li, J. (2023). Using Perusall to motivate students' curriculum-based academic reading. *J. Comput. Educ.* 10, 377–401 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-022-00234-y>
- Miller K, Lukoff B, King, G., & Mazur, E. (2018) Use of a Social Annotation Platform for Pre-Class Reading Assignments in a Flipped Introductory Physics Class. *Front. Educ.* 3:8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2018.00008>