

Reading in the digital age

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Presentation abstract

In 2019, Learning Developers at Lancaster University were awarded funding by ALDinHE to conduct a small project into how students read (Hargreaves et al., 2022a). We explored students' perspectives and practices around reading academic texts in digital format. We analysed how students manage their digital reading, how they interact and engage with texts on-screen, and what influences their choices related to text format. One output of this project is an [interactive online resource](#) (see Hargreaves et al., 2022b) based upon insights gained from our students and we would like to present parts of this resource to the ALDinHE community (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Flipcards and scenarios (see Robin, 2022).

Learn Higher resource: Flipcards and scenarios



The image shows a digital flipcard resource. The main card is titled "Copy and paste function" and features an icon of a document with a pair of scissors and a clipboard. Below the icon, it asks "What does this mean? Using the copy and paste function, or screenshot, to replicate text." and lists three questions: "1) Does this promote shallow or deep learning?", "2) What are the advantages?", and "3) What are the challenges?". At the bottom left, it says "Learning Development at Lancaster University". To the right, a larger card is partially visible, also titled "Copy and paste function", with a question "Learning? Typically this will promote shallow learning." Below this, there are two boxes: "Advantages" and "Challenges". The "Advantages" box lists: "Allows you to record information that may be difficult or laborious to write.", "Can help you to avoid mistakes copying out.", and "You can easily refer back to a specific piece of information." The "Challenges" box lists: "Does not equate to understanding a text. Therefore, this technique requires additional note-taking.", "You need to understand the context around the quotation, as well as the quotation itself.", and "Students may forget what is copied text and what they have rewritten." A small number "4" is visible in the bottom right corner of the larger card.

Community response

An excellent discussion and demonstration, stressing the importance of placing an emphasis on reading, as well as writing. I shall certainly be looking out for this tool as a LearnHigher resource.

For me, it highlighted how students who use copy and paste can inhibit their understanding and retention of information. It has caused me to question whether using copy and paste is a technique to be challenged or discouraged and how this might be achieved. I also eagerly anticipate the tool on LearnHigher.

I think it is interesting that we move away from hard copy books, printouts etc. We generally assume “technology” means more inclusive. It would be interesting to hear from widening participation students, specifically how they find the digital vs “old school” reading and the benefits/concerns they have with digital “reading”.

Authors' reflections

We gained some useful feedback from this session. This included questions around our usage of note-taking and note-making, and further information on how these terms have differing meanings, or connotations, for some. We incorporated this thinking into our resource, and made some changes. We also found this session particularly reaffirming as the response was largely very positive with several participants showing enthusiasm, not only for the resource, but our article and wider work too.

Developing our resource and showcasing it at the conference helped deepen our awareness of the importance of issues around digital reading for students, learning developers and other staff in HE. Getting it ready for the conference and thinking about how to demonstrate it to others, also helped with our organisation of some of the pages and decisions on how to edit parts of the resource. We also valued the opportunity to talk about the resource with the community that we will share it with.

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References

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Author details

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