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# Reading list (R)evolution:

exploring the value of reading lists as a pedagogical tool to support students' development of information skills






Gillian Siddall and  
Hannah Rose

Twitter: [#RLrevolution](#)

Graphics by Stacey Jones 2012

# Session outline

- Context
- Discussion – what is the purpose of a reading list? 
- Overview of research project
- Review of reading lists 
- Summary of our research project findings
- Reflection– revolutionising reading lists ... 



# Context

- University of Northampton
- Foundation Degree students





# Group discussion

1. What is the purpose of a reading list?
2. How do you expect students to use a reading list?
3. How useful do you think reading lists are?







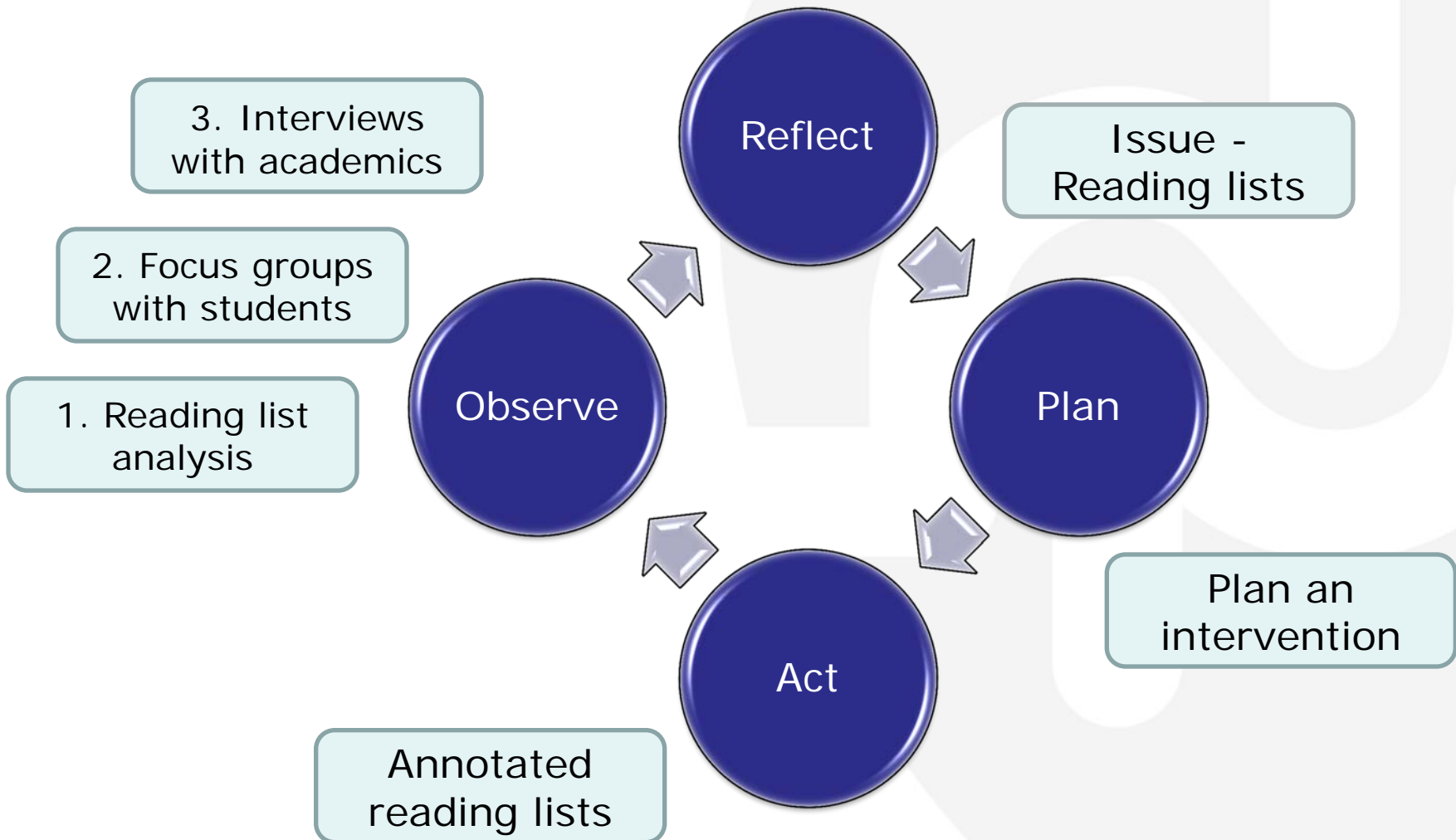
# The research project

Library and Information Research  
Group research award 2011

An investigation into the use  
of reading lists as a  
pedagogical tool to support  
the development of  
information skills amongst  
Foundation Degree students.



# Action research



# Put yourself in the students' shoes



**Think like a  
student**





# Checklist

Things to think about when you are looking at the reading lists:

- ✓ **Number** and **type** of resources
- ✓ Use of **headings**: Core / Essential / Recommended / Other
- ✓ **Structure**: Divided by topic / subject / session / assignment
- ✓ **Accuracy** and **consistency** of referencing (Harvard)
- ✓ Is there any **guidance** for students on how they should use the reading list?

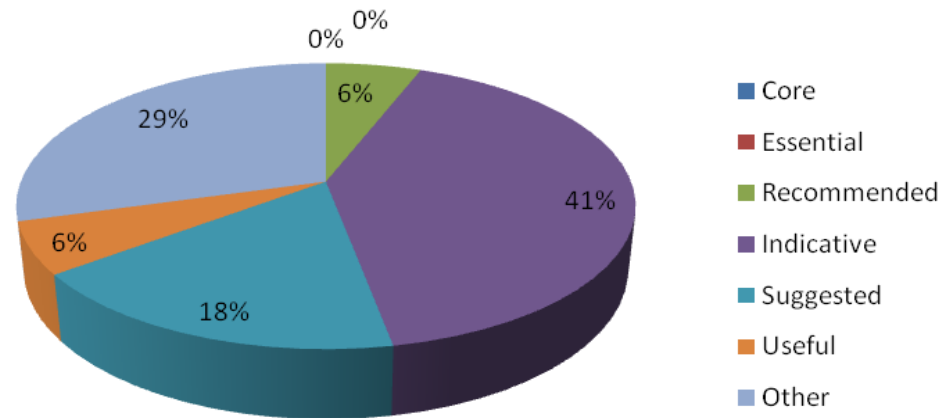


# Reading list overview

## Sample reading lists

- ❑ Books made up **74%** of the sample reading lists
- ❑ Journals made up **6%**, with some only giving journal titles
- ❑ Only **17%** of reading lists were referenced according to the University style

### Labels on Reading Lists



*“Suggested indicative reading and other learning resources”*

Labels: Set, General, Other, Background and Reference



# Listening to the student voice ...

How do students use and value reading lists?



## As a starting point ...



“... particularly with students that have been out of the education system for a number of years, styles of learning have changed dramatically from when I was at school. So reading this [list] gives me some **sort of idea as to where I can begin, where I can start,** even what things to look at...”

(Year 1 student)

## To give direction ...



"... the reading list ... **points you in directions** and gives you a clue of what you're supposed to be doing."

(Year 1 student)

"...so if you know you need to use more journals you can look in the journal bit."

(Year 1 student)

## Life saving ...



“I think reading lists play an important role because it’s like being thrown into a swimming pool with lead boots on and no **life saving device** ... I think particularly for new students the reading list is **absolutely invaluable.**”

(Year 1 student)



## Modelling academic practice ...



"It does make me chuckle when I get the odd reading list and I look and I think: **typo, spelling mistake, error**, and then we get penalised!"

(Year 2 student)

"...if they expect you to reference in a certain way, as a university, the reading list should be **modelled**."

(Year 2 student)

## Academic skills ...



“... if you're stuck what words to use in these search engines... **you look at the reading list and it speaks** a word 'manipulative' and you think well I'll try that and boom, boom, boom, you've got loads of words...”

(Year 2 student)

“If you find a core text and you do some work from it you'll find a reference in the book that leads you on.”

(Year 1 student)

## Reading lists for scaffolding ...



*'An important aspect of scaffolding instruction is that the scaffolds are temporary. As the learner's abilities increase the scaffolding provided by the more knowledgeable other is progressively withdrawn. Finally the learner is able to complete the task or master the concepts independently.'*

(Chang *et al.*, 2002. Cited in: Van Der Stuyf, 2002, p.2).



# GEO1006 - Introducing Human Geographies



**Faith Tucker**

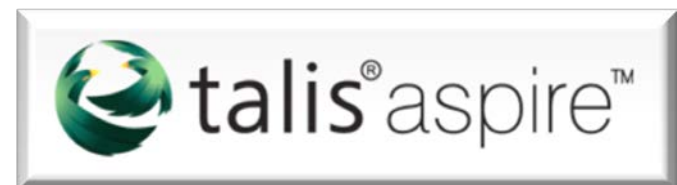
a lecturer

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## [Table of contents](#) [\[show\]](#)

165 items

Group by: [Section](#) | [Type](#)

### **ACCESSING THESE RESOURCES** (0 items)

Please let us know if any of the links no longer work (we'll then sort this out) or if you are finding it difficult to access a copy of a particular book (we'll then prioritise this when buying new books). To report either issue, please email: [faith.tucker@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:faith.tucker@northampton.ac.uk)

### **Theme 1 - Why does place matter?** (58 items)

This section of the module is taught by Faith Tucker and Matt Collins

#### **Place - definitions and approaches** (7 items)

[Place: a short introduction](#) - Cresswell, Tim, 2004

Book | esp. Chapters 1 and 4

[Introducing human geographies](#) - Cloke, Paul J., Crang, Phil, Goodwin, Mark, 2005

Book | **Recommended** | Chapter by Cresswell, pp.485-494



# How can we revolutionise reading lists to support students' skills development and enhance their learning?



# References

Chang, K., Chen, I., & Sung, Y. (2002). The effect of concept mapping to enhance text comprehension and summarization. *The Journal of Experimental Education*. **71**(1), 5-23. Cited in Van Der Stuyf, R. (2002) Scaffolding as a teaching strategy. *Adolescent Learning and Development*. Fall, 2-13.

Lumsden, E., McBryde-Wilding, H. & Rose, H. (2010) Collaborative practice in enhancing the first year student experience in higher education. *Enhancing the Learner Experience in Higher Education* [online], **2** (1), 12-24. Available from:  
<http://journals.northampton.ac.uk/index/php/elehe/index> [Accessed 13th December 2010].

Stokes, P. and Martin, L. (2008) Reading lists: a study of tutor and student perceptions, expectations and realities. *Studies in Higher Education*. **33**(2), pp.113-125.