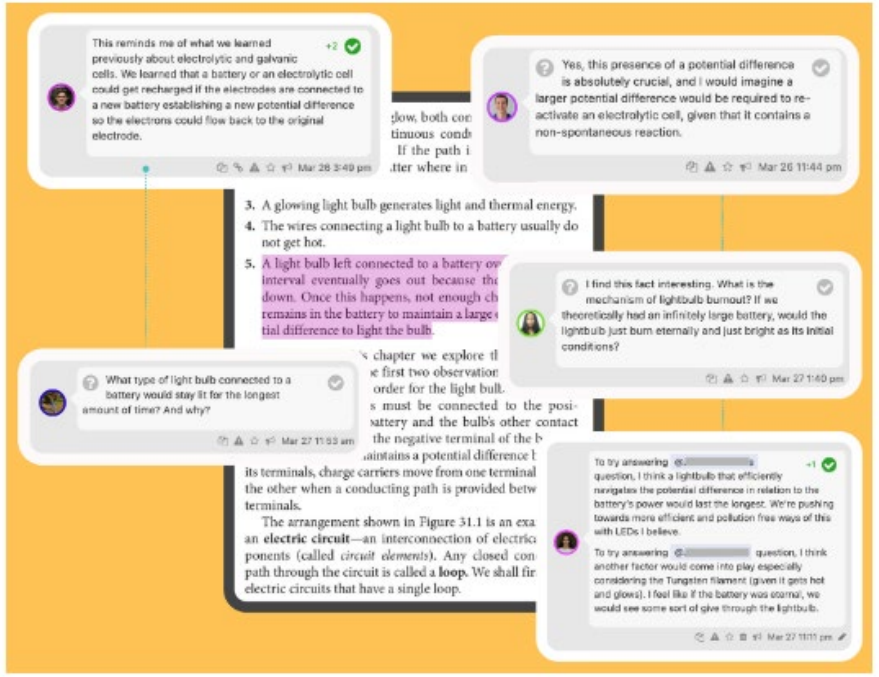
THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

ARTS

20 April 2023 | UoA Learning Design Community of Interest @ Ranga Auaha Ako

Enhancing Student Reading Engagement

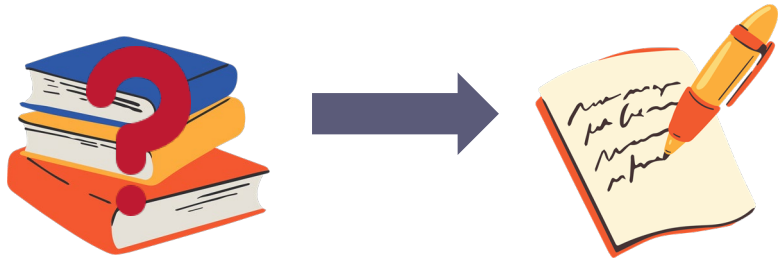
Fostering collaborative learning through social annotation with Perusall



Lynne S. Park
| Research Fellow, Korean Studies

1 Previous approach: Its Benefits and Drawbacks

- **Challenge**: Students' low level of engagement with the required reading material
- **Strategy:** Assigned weekly short essays based on the reading



Students' feedback (from ASIAN 204/302, 2021 S1)

"Tutorials and group discussions as well as course weekly quizzes were really helpful in **keeping me accountable and engaged with the course content**."
"The online readings/quizzes were also helpful for **digesting the learning**."
"The weekly quizzes too, they **encouraged me to keep up with my readings and were really useful to understanding the week's lecture**"
"Online assignments were **helpful for understanding the content of the course**."
"relevant readings **perked up my understanding of each course material**."
" I really appreciated the way in which the reading based quizzes **prepared us for the lecture topics each week**."
" The reading quizzes – **this ensured that I stayed up to date with the readings and actually engaged with them**."

Benefits

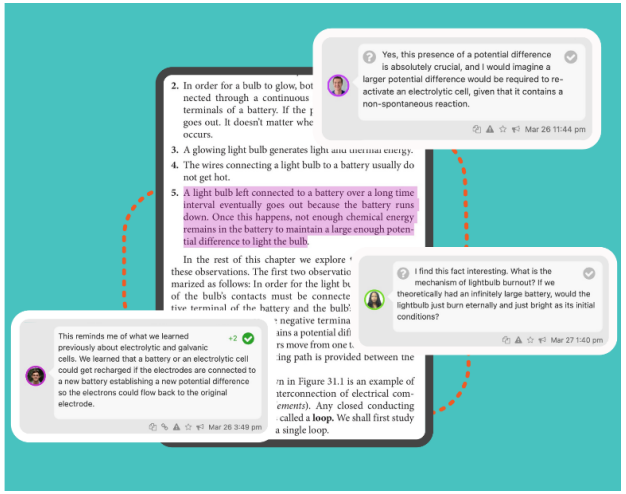
- Incentivized students to read the assigned materials before lectures.
- Earning marks each week enabled students to track their progress throughout the semester.

Drawbacks

- Some students only read relevant sections of the texts.
- Difficulty in crafting comprehensive questions that required extensive reading.
- Time-consuming marking process

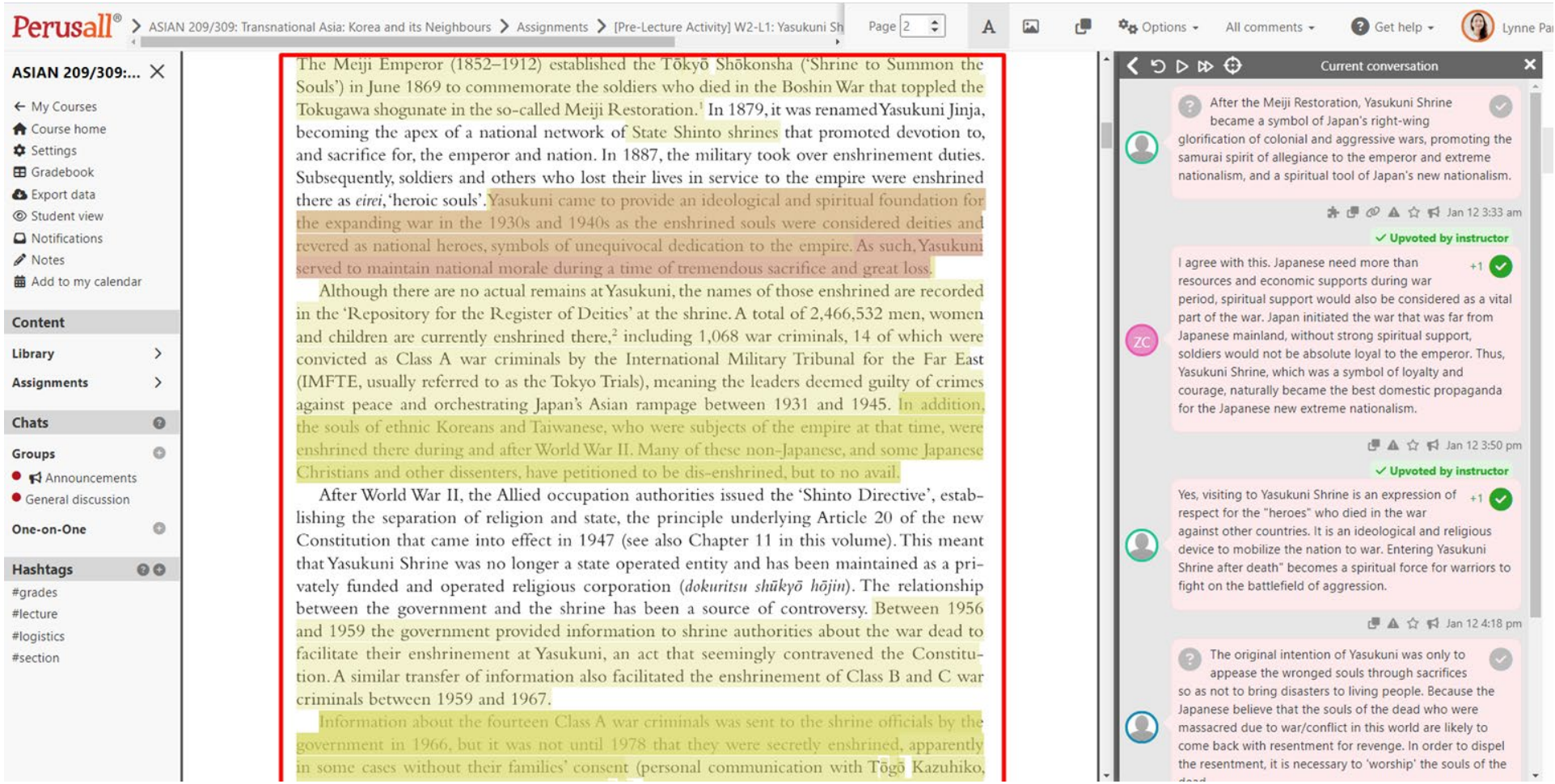
2 Perusall Trial: Its Features

- **A social annotation platform**: Designed to deliver all readings in one place
- **Small groups read and annotate ‘together,’ asynchronously**: Students read and annotate on their own time, at their own pace, from anywhere with a web connection
- **Designed to prepare and reward students**: Intrinsically (through peer-to-peer engagement and collaboration) and extrinsically (through grading) motivating students to read before coming to lecture. If done correctly most students will get full marks
- **Providing actionable data for instructors**: Automated marking, Student confusion report, Student activity report
- **Sync seamlessly with Canvas**: offering single sign-on and grad sync



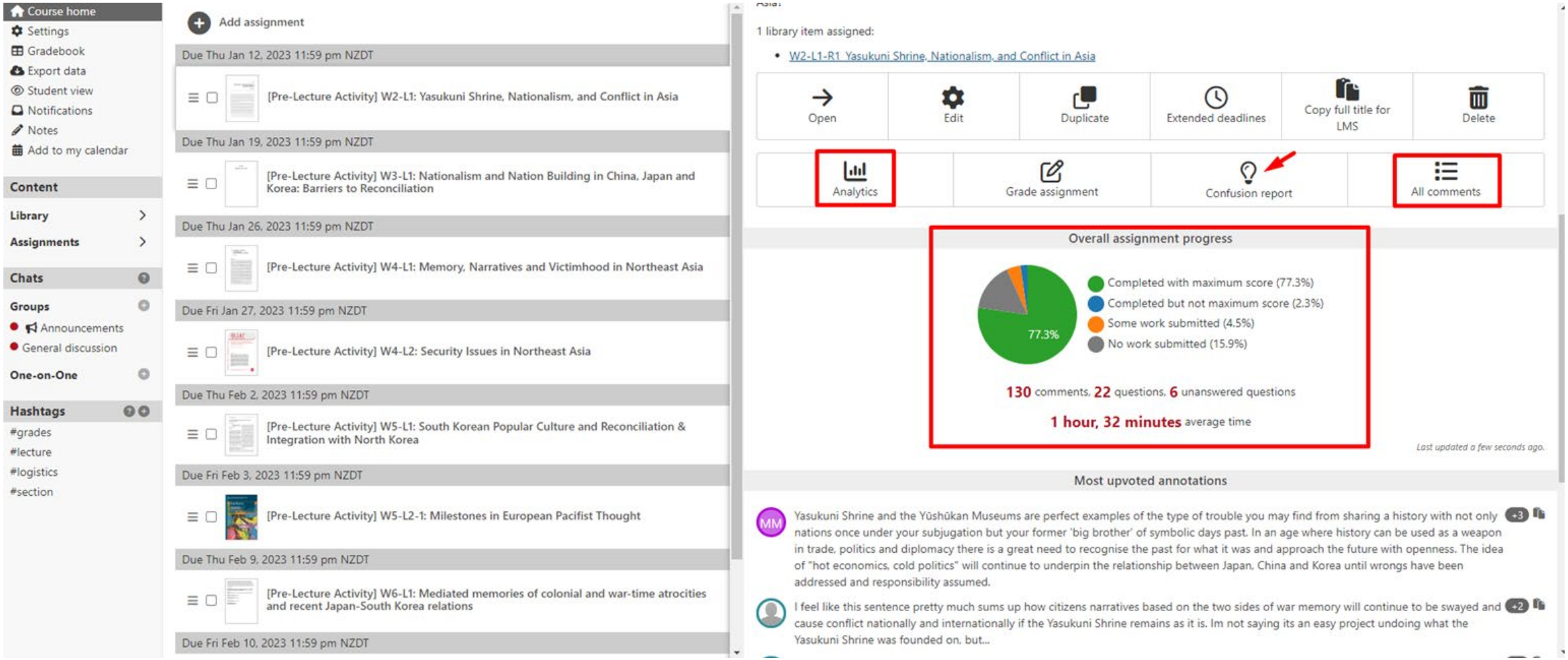
2 Perusall Trial: How does it work? (1)

Assigned small groups read and annotate ‘together,’ asynchronously



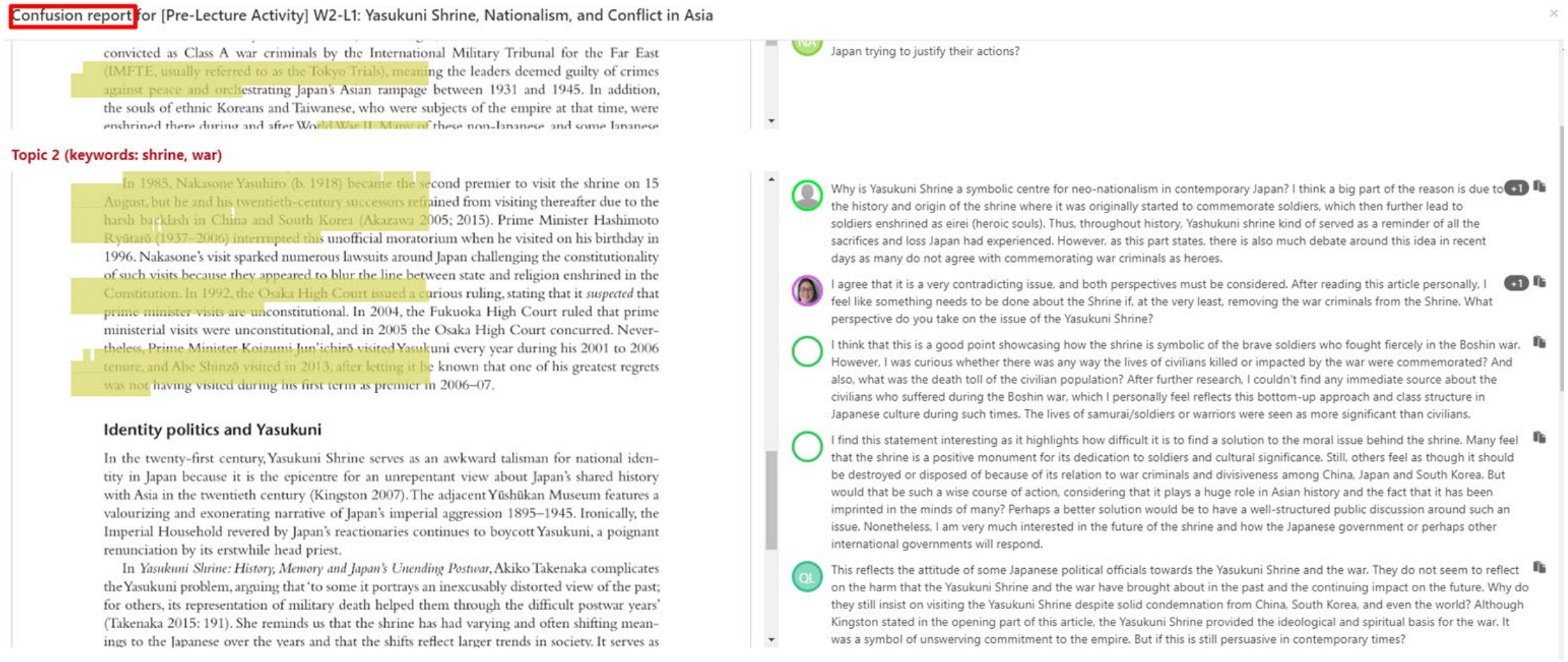
2 Perusall Trial: How does it work? (2 -1)

Actionable Data: Instructors can easily review overall assignment progress, individual students' activity (including comments they made), and all comments quickly!



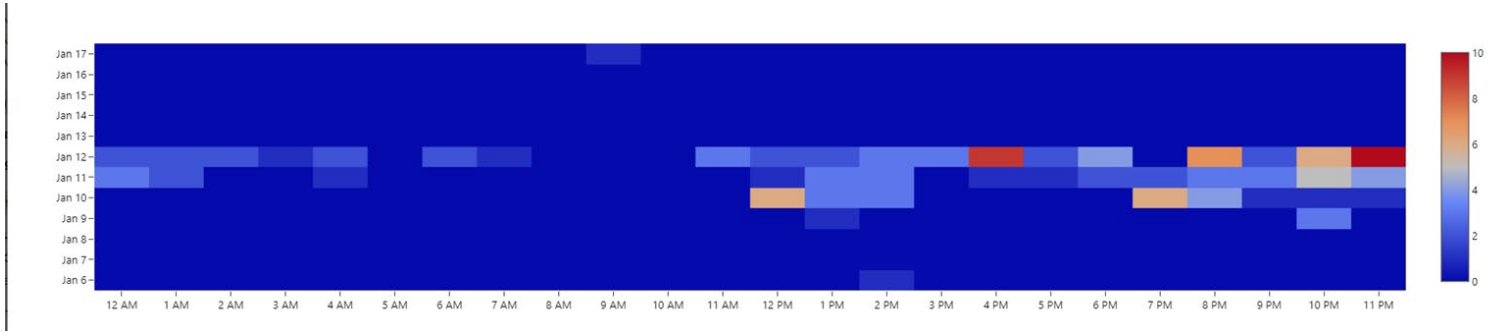
2 Perusall Trial: How does it work? (2 -2)

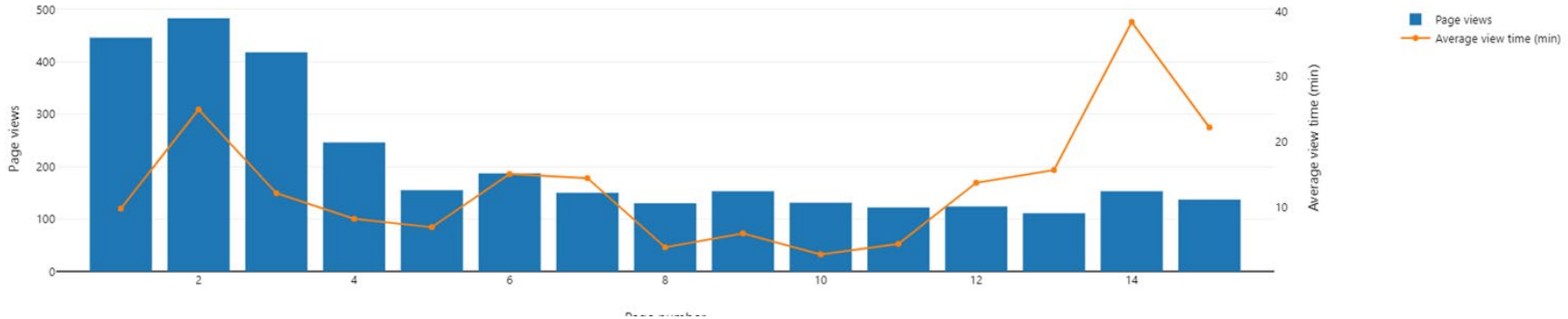
Confusion report: Analyses students' reading behaviours to identify areas where they are struggling with a text and provides instructors with insights on how to better support them.

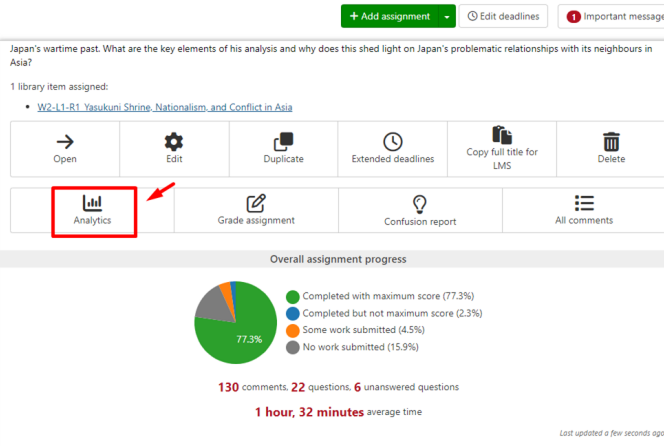


2 Perusall Trial: How does it work? (2 -3)

Analytics on reading activities: Quick review on annotation submission time, page views and average time spent for each page, and individual student activity







	Last name	First name	Viewing time	Active engagement time	# annotations posted	# responses posted	# comment upvotes student gave	# question upvotes student gave	# comment upvotes student received	# question upvotes student received	Total word count	Average words per annotation
NA			3 days, 15 hours, 7 minutes	1 hour, 55 minutes (2%)	5	1	0	0	2	1	174	34.80

2 Perusall Trial: How does it work? (3 -1)

Automated marking: Student's reading activity is graded automatically based on pre-set components

Grade [Pre-Lecture Activity] W2-L1: Yasukuni Shrine, Nationalism, and Conflict in Asia, due January 12, 2023 11:59 pm NZDT

Assignment score (0-5): 5

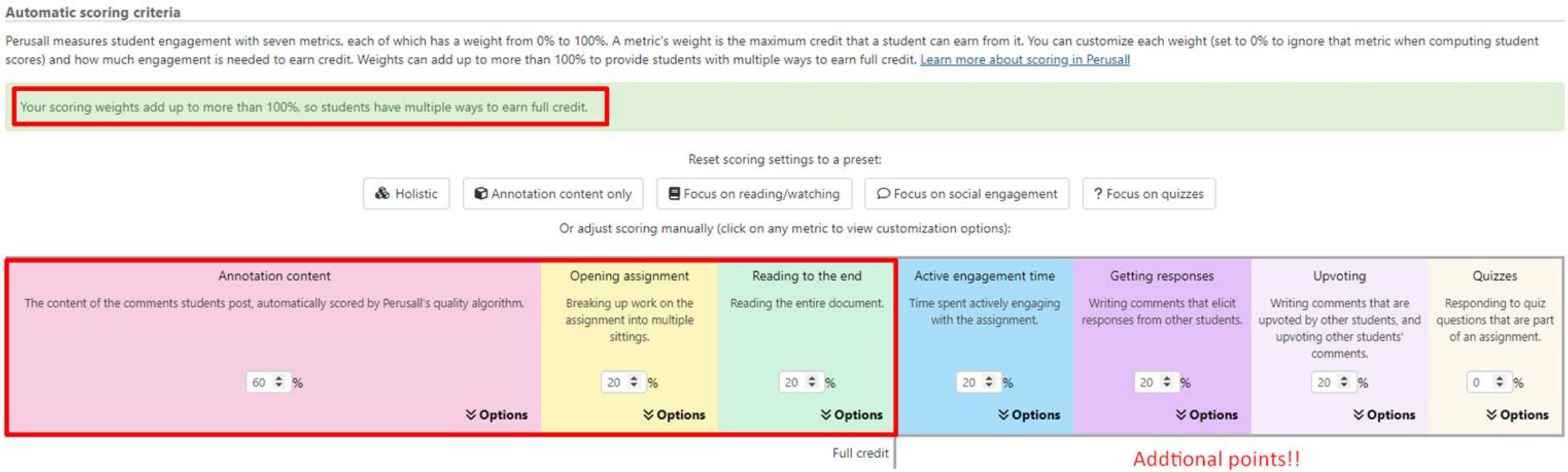
Optionally provide a comment on this student's work (this will be visible to the student)

Engagement metrics | Comments submitted

Metric	Details		Score for this metric	
Annotation content	3 comments submitted (3 before deadline, 388 words, average 129.33 words per comment)	95.8% of max possible credit for annotation content 4% distribution penalty applied	$95.8\% \times 60\%$	= **57.5%** out of **60%**
Opening assignment	Opened assignment 14 times	1/3 of max possible score each time assignment is opened before the final deadline	$14 \times \frac{1}{3} \times 20\%$	= **20.0%** out of **20%**
Reading to the end	Read 93% of content before the final deadline		$93\% \times 20\%$	= **18.7%** out of **20%**
Active engagement time	85.75 minutes of active time	1/60 of max possible score for each minute of active time spent before the final deadline	$85.75 \times \frac{1}{60} \times 20\%$	= **20.0%** out of **20%**
Getting responses	2 comments that elicited a response	1/10 of max possible score for each comment before the final deadline that elicits a response	$2 \times \frac{1}{10} \times 20\%$	= **4.0%** out of **20%**
Upvoting	3 comments that were upvoted 0 upvotes made on others' comments	1/10 of max possible score for each upvote received before the final deadline; 1/20 of max possible score for each upvote given before the final deadline	$(3 \times \frac{1}{10} + 0 \times \frac{1}{20}) \times 20\%$	= **6.0%** out of **20%**
Quizzes	0 questions answered correctly			
Total				**126.1%**

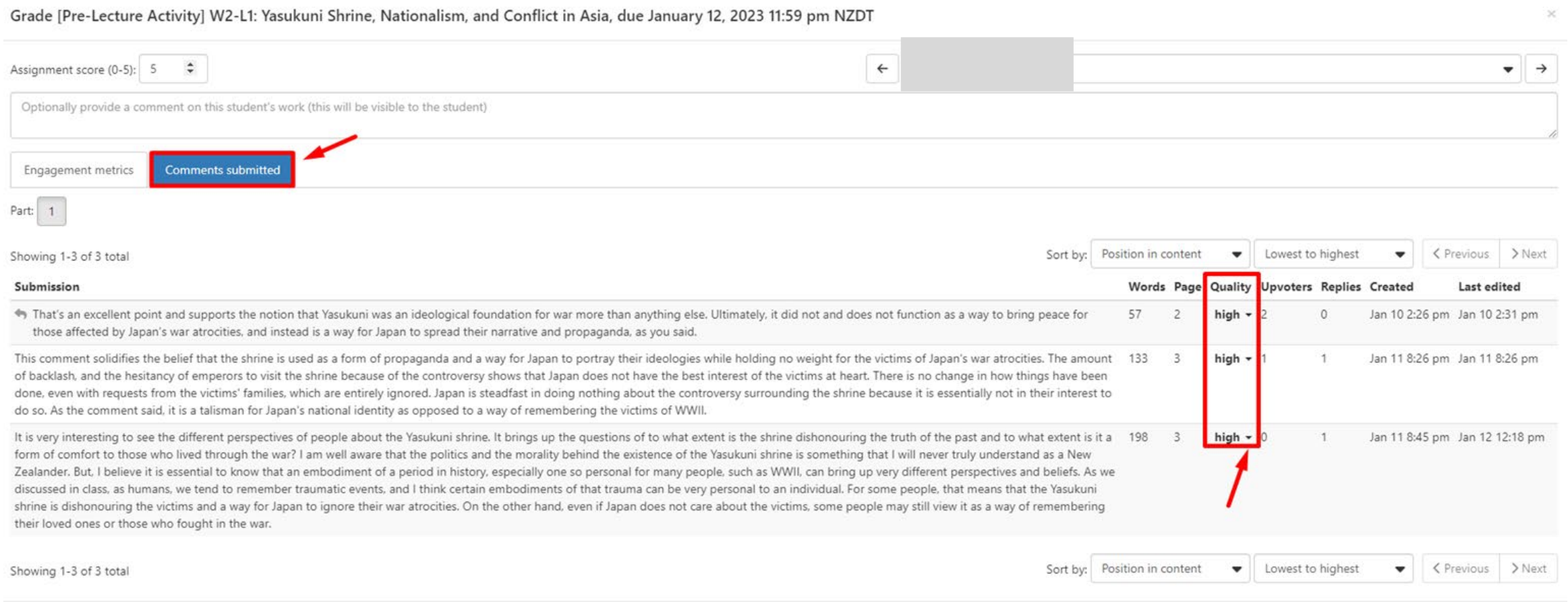
2 Perusall Trial: How does it work? (3 -2)

Automated marking: Student's reading activity is graded automatically based on pre-set components

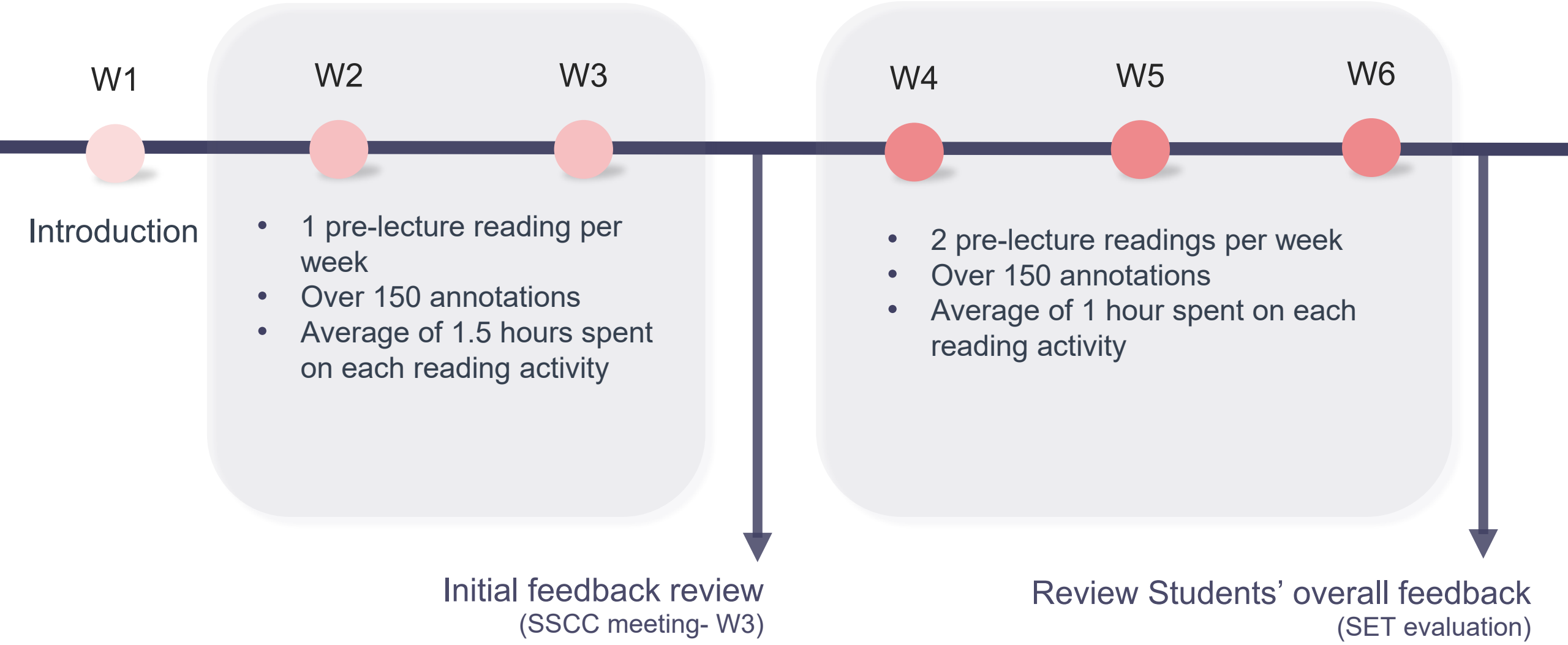


2 Perusall Trial: How does it work? (3 -3)

Automated marking: Student's reading activity is graded automatically based on pre-set components



2 Perusall Trial: 2023 Summer Course, Asian 209/309



3 Reflection on Perusall Trial: From Students (1)

Interactive and Collaborative Learning

- "Fully anonymous" feature in Perusall
- Safe and non-threatening environment for discussions
- Perusall's safeguards against inappropriate behaviours:
  1) Instructor monitoring
  2) Ability for students to flag inappropriate comments.

Perusall

> *"I like how the teaching team has made it possible for us to **interact with other people** in our class and **share our ideas/thoughts/ feelings** without making the student uncomfortable doing so. The Pre–Lecture Activity (Perusall) was **enjoyable**, and I was **delighted to read my classmates' comments!** I like how we can also keep our **anonymity** while participating in the activity;. This allows for **more discussion** because everyone may be **less shy to voice** their opinion.."*

3-1 Reflection on Perusall Trial: From Students (2)

Engaging with Course Materials

- Clear explanation of Perusall's purpose.
- Guidelines for pre-lecture reading activity on Perusall.
- Requirement of three value-adding posts for meaningful discussions, including
  1) Detailed response to peer's annotation.
  2) Sharing personal experiences.
  3) Connecting examples to course concepts.
  4) Utilizing other course materials.

Perusall

> *"The tutorials and the perusall readings were a very **powerful way to engage with the material**."*
>
> *"found the Perusall activities incredibly helpful as they allowed me to **gain background knowledge of the topic before the lecture**. It also allowed me to connect with my peers in a more comfortable anonymous environment. Continually, the wide variety of guest speakers was incredibly engaging and definitely widened my point of view on numerous issues in East Asia."*

3-1 Reflection on Perusall Trial: From Students (3)

Promoting Peer-to-Peer Interaction

- Smaller groups of up to five students in Perusall: Optimal for meaningful interactions among students.
- Opportunities to connect with peers and read their perspectives.
- Enriched learning experience through peer-to-peer interactive learning.

Perusall

> *"The Perusall reading assignments is a very good way to keep us on top of our reading, and it is also a **good way to read other students perspectives** on the chosen reading."*
>
> *"The Perusall (readings of the week) new setting for this course is an interesting one... There will also **be other students who agree with and supplement my ideas**. This allows us to **communicate effectively in this space**, which is very interesting."*

3-1 Reflection on Perusall Trial: From Instructor

Benefits

- Great way to encourage reading before class and reward it
- Ensured in-depth reading
- Higher quality discussion with more students' contributions (especially for quieter students)
- Deeper understanding of students' reading engagement through actionable data provided in Perusall
- Automated assessment

Drawbacks

- Initial set-up required at least one day (or more..)
- Still require monitoring to review students' activity and finalise grades before syncing back to Canvas

ASIAN 209/309:...
My Courses
Course home
Settings
Gradebook
Export data
Student view
Notifications
Notes
Add to my calendar

Content
Library
Assignments

Chats
Groups
Announcements
General discussion
One-on-One

Hashtags
#grades
#lecture
#logistics
#section

National traumas play an important role in shaping national identity. Shared catastrophes and collective suffering constitute a powerful anvil on which to hammer out a useful national identity for those in power. Yet some traumas are chosen for this task of nation-building and promoting national unity while others are ignored or marginalized. In some respects, ignored traumas reveal more about a nation than the chosen traumas, representing a subversive and hidden narrative that is sidelined for various reasons. The chosen traumas are selectively drawn and presented in ways that favor those in power and tend to glide over aspects or experiences that don't conveniently fit the consolidating narrative of shared ordeal. Traumas are especially useful because they are the basis for compelling narratives of victimization and thus forge emotional bonds while advancing political agendas and eliding inconvenient problems. Those in power constantly pick at the scabs of past trauma because they are far more useful when festering and not meant to be healed. Repetition of the story, focusing on vivid and horrific details, helps keep the pain alive and passes it down to the next generation. Precisely because traumas are prepared for public consumption, they necessarily involve a certain degree of simplification, and an artful reimagining. There is good and evil, heroes and villains, perpetrators and victims, and a certain level of coherence implausibly attached to chaotic events where in reality there are gray zones, clarity where there is blurriness, firm conclusions where there is uncertainty. History draws on facts, but how they are connected and interpreted establishes a narrative, a mosaic that conveys a desired message. In contrast to the theme of sports discussed in the preceding chapter,

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Current conversation

✓ Upvoted by instructor

NA

This reminds me of what Dr Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye said in her lecture about how we tend to focus on the negative relations between nations and that those positive shared histories are often forgotten because they are not as useful a tool for nation building and nationalistic narratives

+1

Jan 17 2:54 pm Quality: high

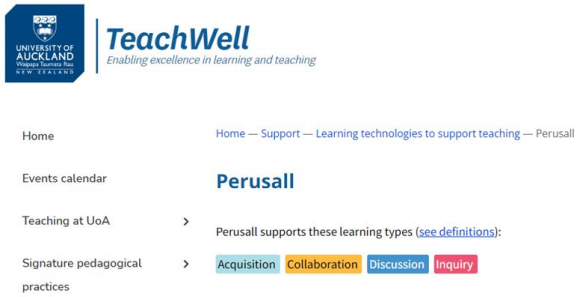
I also thought about Dr. Melissa's lecture in regards to this section, as well as her question regarding how long we will remember WW2. I believe this is linked as the gore and brutality of WW2 is at the center of our teaching around it in the education system as well as in our remembrance services. I think today, the number of lives lost in the war, the horrific ways in which people died, and the war crimes committed are at the front of our memories, which, as the reading suggests, keeps the pain alive and as Dr. Melissa suggested, increases the likelihood that is will remain in our memories for a long time to come.

Jan 19 1:58 pm Quality: high

Enter your comment or question and press Enter. Mention a friend by typing @. Add hashtags by typing #.

Perusall Trial: How to start? (1)

Step 1: Explore how-to guides on TeachWell Perusall page first



Perusall

QR code for the TeachWell Perusall page

How-to guides

Perusall guide for teachers
(a one page guide from the University of Auckland)

Perusall guides
(from the Perusall team)

A case study in using Perusall
(video presentation – Ann Gaskett, School of Biological Sciences)
(*Note: this was recorded before Perusall integration with Canvas*)

Perusall Lightening Round
(video presentation from 17 November 2022 Learning Design Community of Interest)
Teachers from Faculty of Arts, Science, Business and Economics, and Law shared their experiences with Perusall.

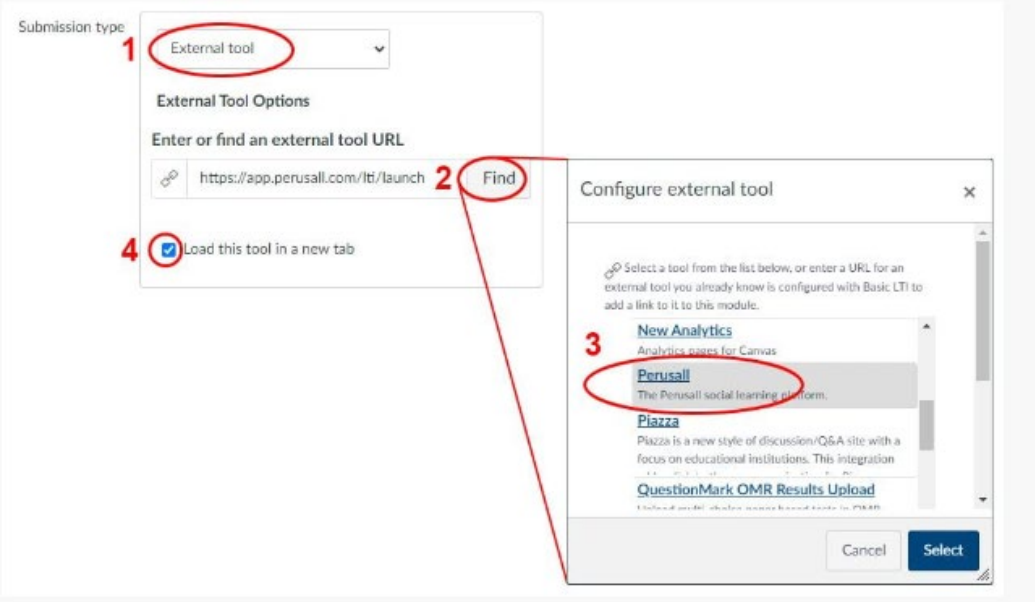
Using Canvas Groups with Perusall
(from the University of Melbourne)

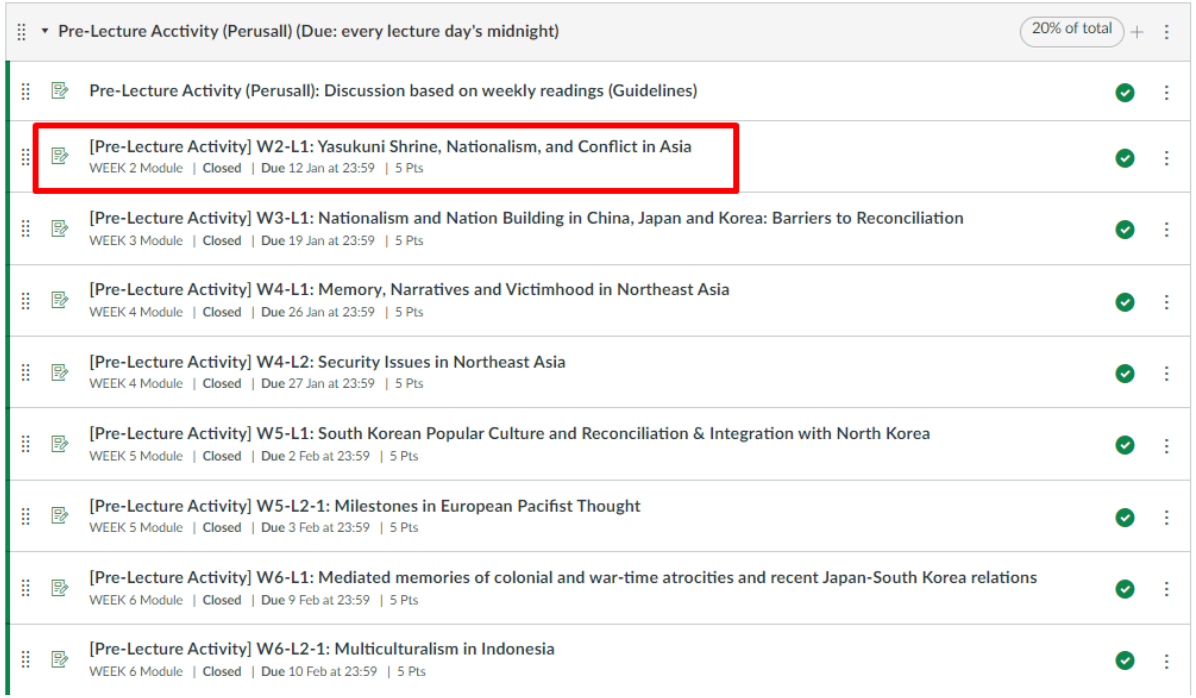
Social presence for engagement
(a case study from Science, the University of Auckland)

How to assess students' ability to analyse and discuss critical readings?
(article from the University of Melbourne)

Perusall Trial: How to start? (2)

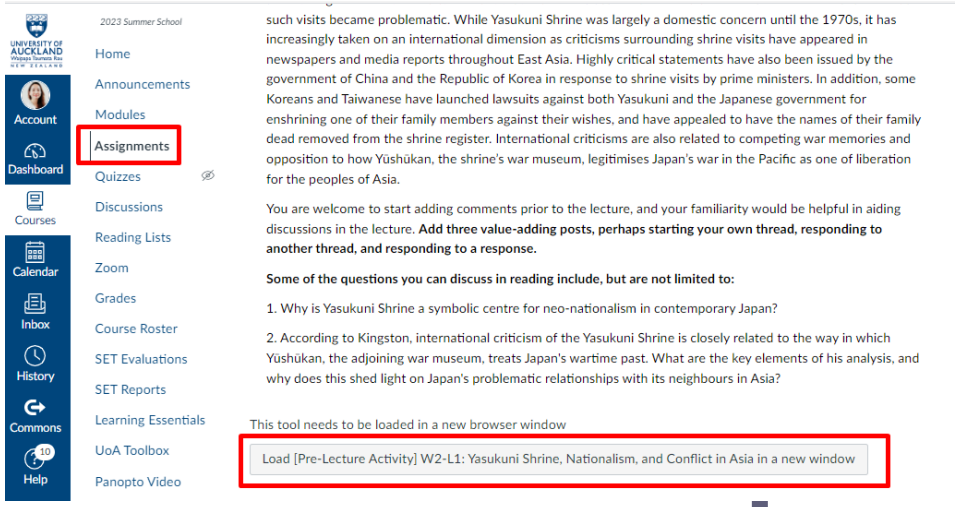
Step 2: Add Perusall to Canvas Assignments

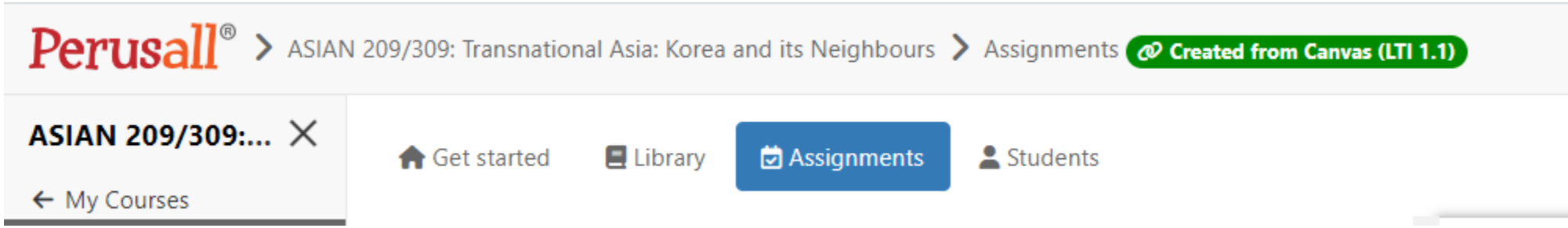




Perusall Trial: How to start? (3)

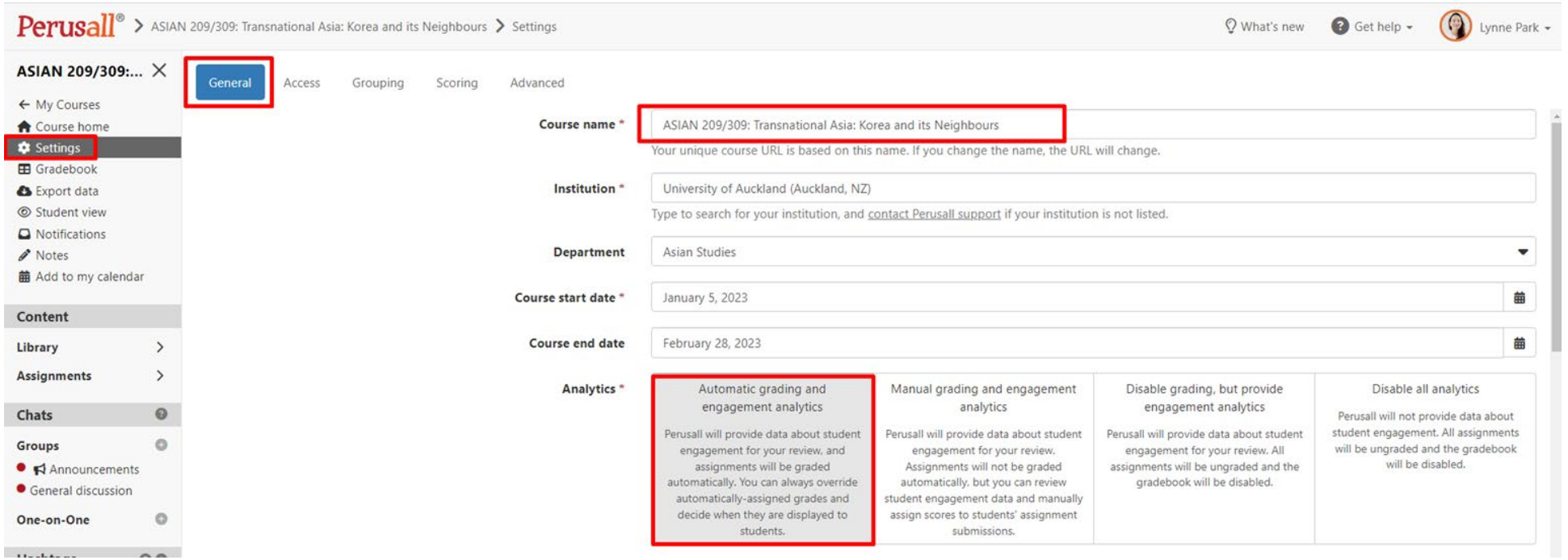
Step 3: Lunch Perusall assignment from Canvas Assignment

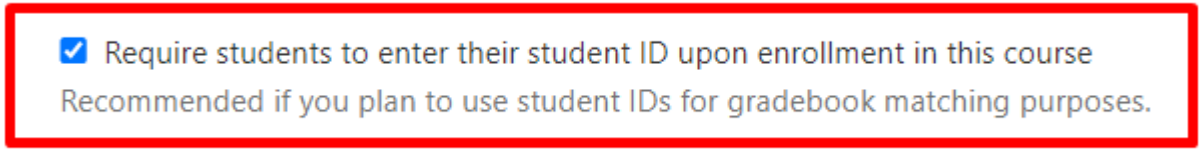




Perusall Trial: How to start? (4)

Step 4: Settings – General

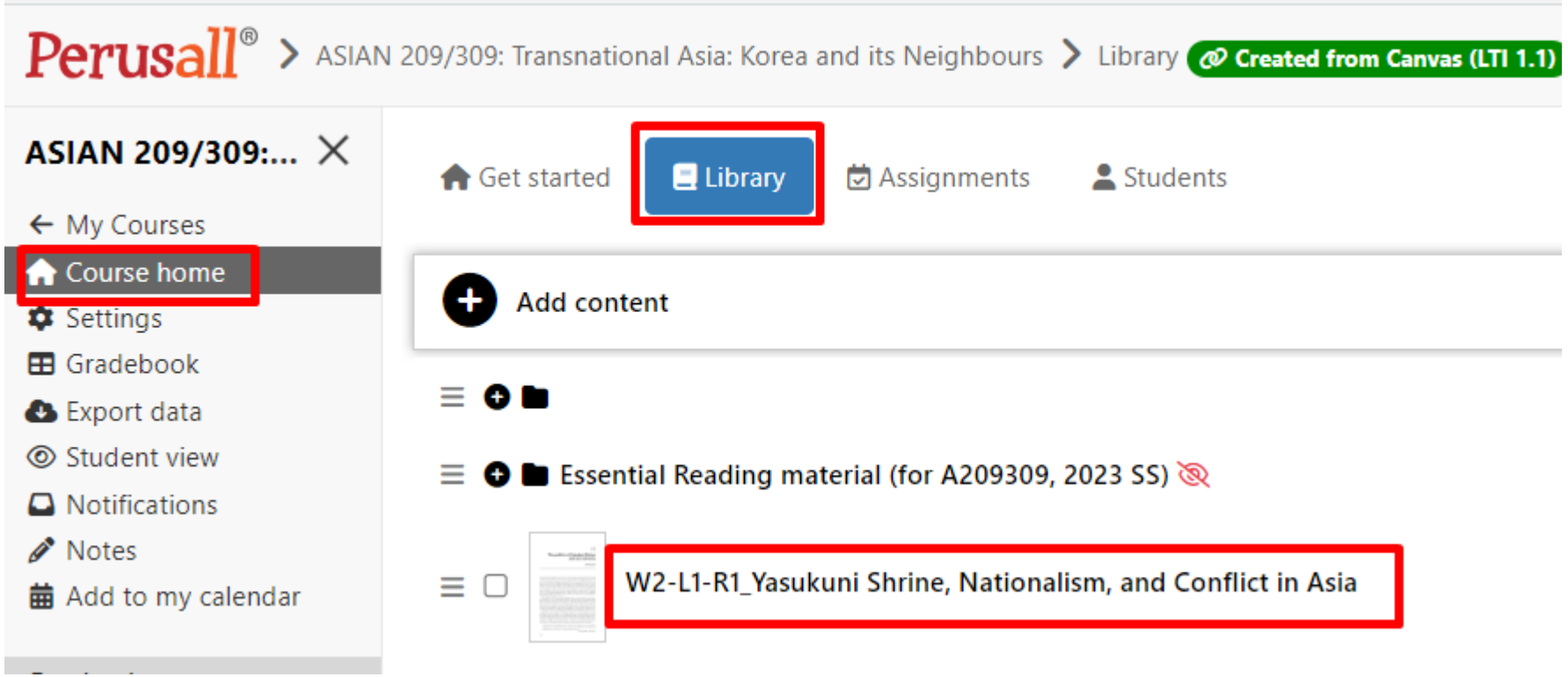




Perusall Trial: How to start? (5)

Step 5: Course home – Library: Add contents as required for the assignments

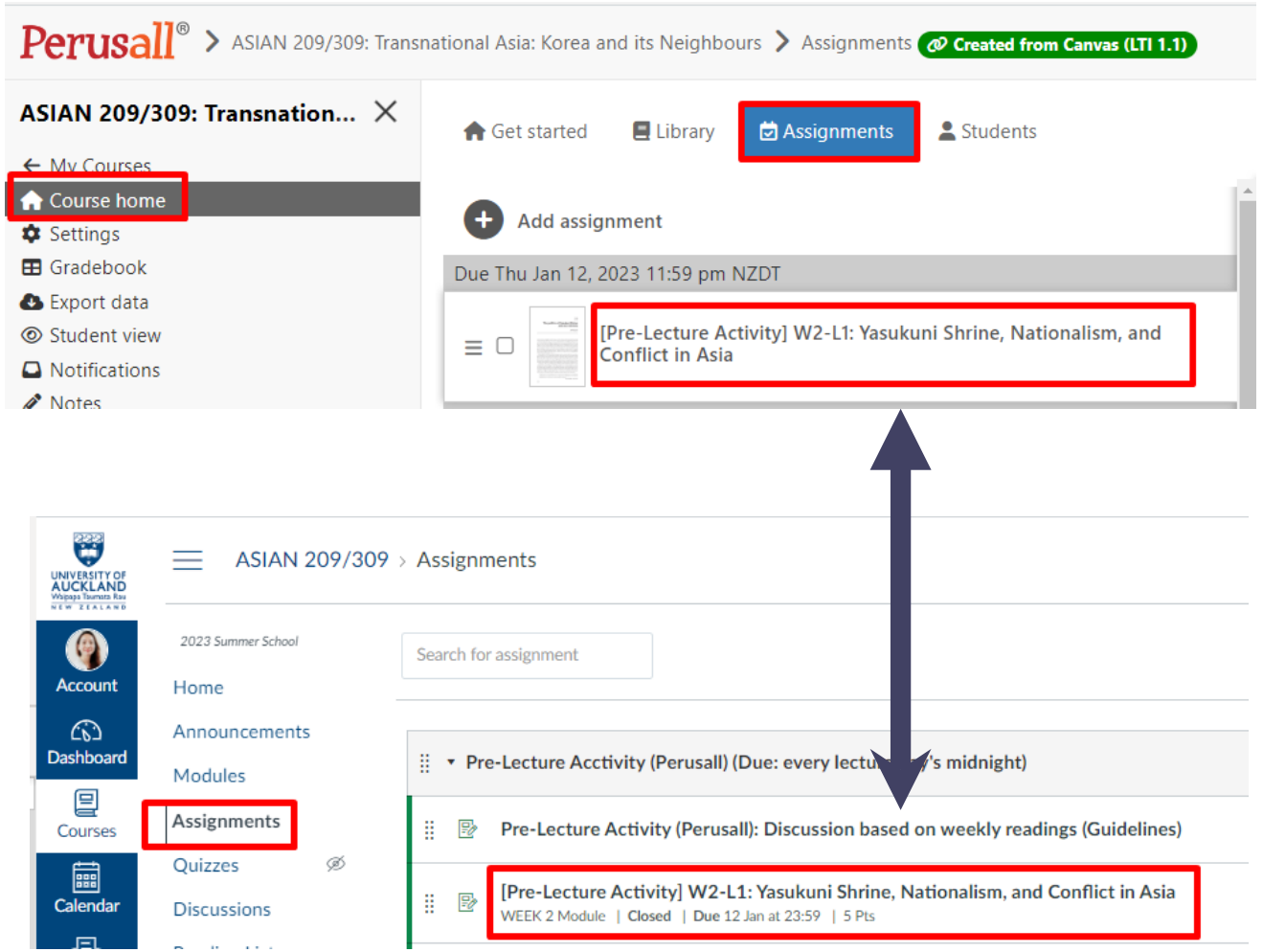
* Note for copyright issue: The contents uploaded in Perusall should be listed in Talis to comply with CLL licensing requirements.



Perusall Trial: How to start? (6)

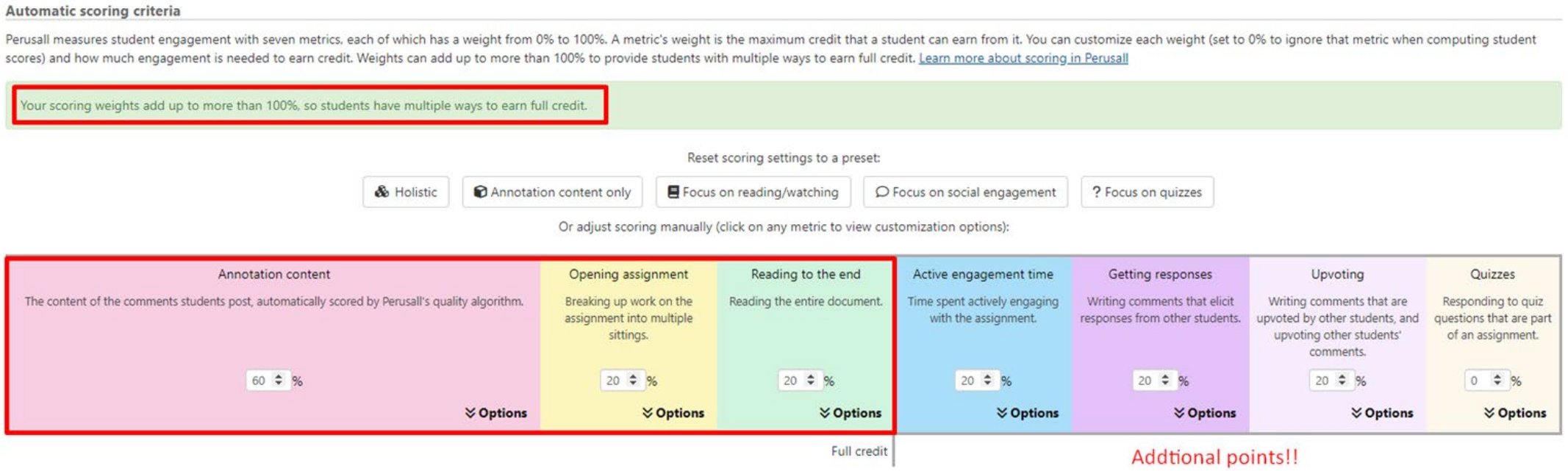
Step 6: Course home – Assignments
: Give the assignment a name.

The name should exactly match the name in the Canvas Assignment (this is how Perusall knows which Canvas assignment to pass the scores back to)



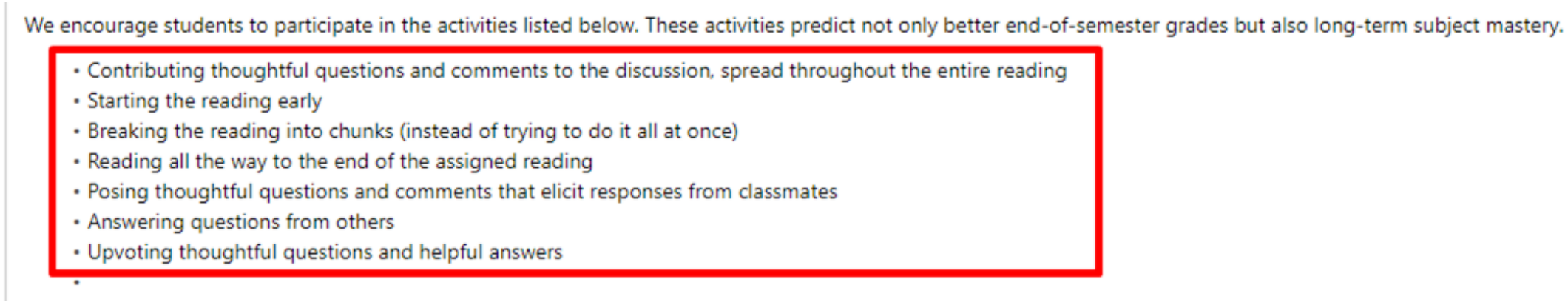
Reflection on Perusall Trial: Key Considerations (1)

1. **Offering the carrot - Design to reward for full marks**
   : Based on the purpose of the assignment, decide on engagement metrics (Annotation content, opening assignment, reading to the end, active engagement time, getting responses, upvoting)
   : Relieves student anxiety and focuses on the reading activity itself



Reflection on Perusall Trial: Key Considerations (2)

2. **Providing activity requirements**
   : Target number of annotations (e.g., three-value adding comments)
   : Provide examples of what good annotation looks like and what it's not
   : Encourage students to participate in the activities for reading
   : Communicate assessment criteria by focusing on learning itself rather than providing precise detail



We encourage students to participate in the activities listed below. These activities predict not only better end-of-semester grades but also long-term subject mastery.

- Contributing thoughtful questions and comments to the discussion, spread throughout the entire reading
- Starting the reading early
- Breaking the reading into chunks (instead of trying to do it all at once)
- Reading all the way to the end of the assigned reading
- Posing thoughtful questions and comments that elicit responses from classmates
- Answering questions from others
- Upvoting thoughtful questions and helpful answers

Reflection on Perusall Trial: Key Considerations (3)

3. **Maximising interaction while minimizing frustration**
   : Set up the stable and optimal group size for your course
   : Default number is 25, but decide its optimal size based on course aim and its material
   : Recommended group size is 4-10

4. **Allowing students to be anonymous**
   : Option to post comments anonymous option OR Fully anonymous option (Not for the instructor)

5. **Motivating students intrinsically**
   : Explain why using this tool (importance of reading & working with peers)