Why read? Evaluating initiatives to nurture lifelong readers in Higher Education

Laura Woods, Computing & Engineering Librarian
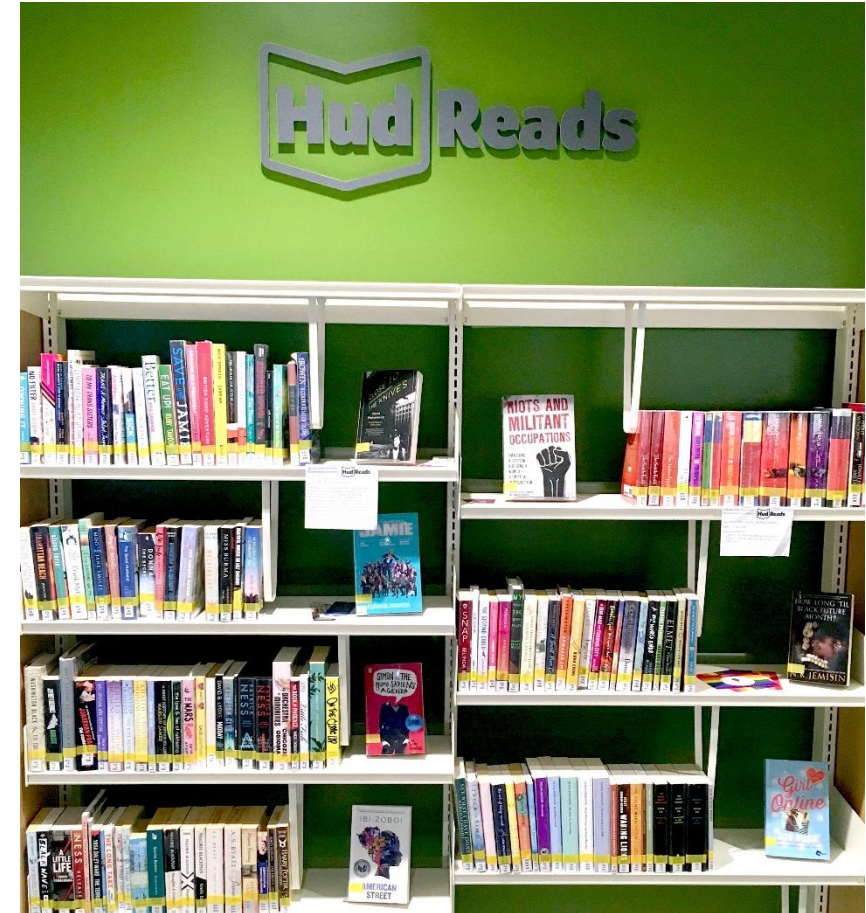
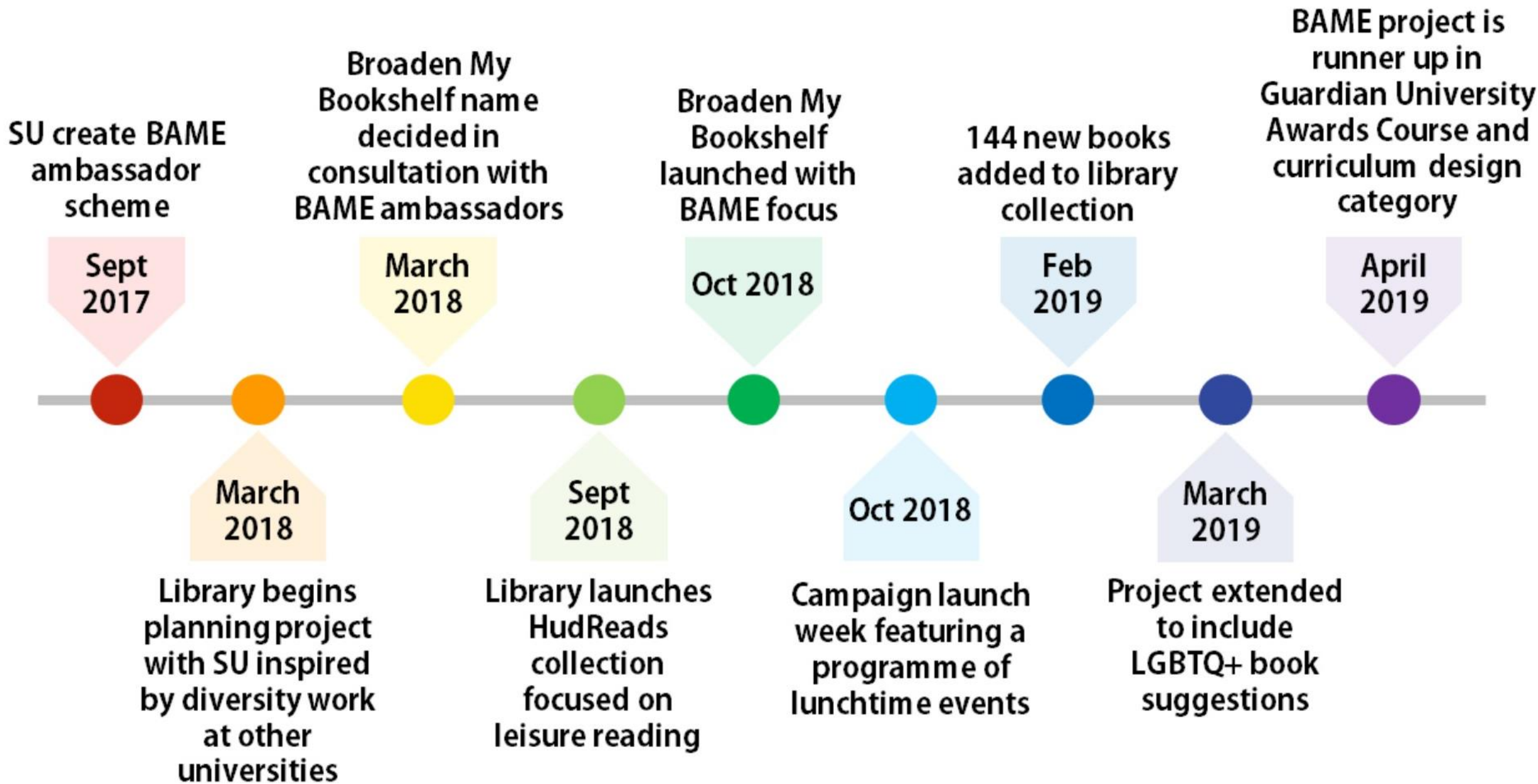Zoë Johnson, Applied Sciences Librarian

University of Huddersfield

@woodsiegirl @zedej

What is HudReads?

- Collection of leisure reading books, launched September 2018

- Located just inside the library entrance

- Launched in response to student requests for a "reading books" section

- Coincided with "Broaden my Bookshelf", launched October 2018

SU create BAME ambassador scheme

Sept 2017

Broaden My Bookshelf name decided in consultation with BAME ambassadors

March 2018

Broaden My Bookshelf launched with BAME focus

Oct 2018

144 new books added to library collection

Feb 2019

BAME project is runner up in Guardian University Awards Course and curriculum design category

April 2019

March 2018

Library begins planning project with SU inspired by diversity work at other universities

Sept 2018

Library launches HudReads collection focused on leisure reading

Oct 2018

Campaign launch week featuring a programme of lunchtime events

March 2019

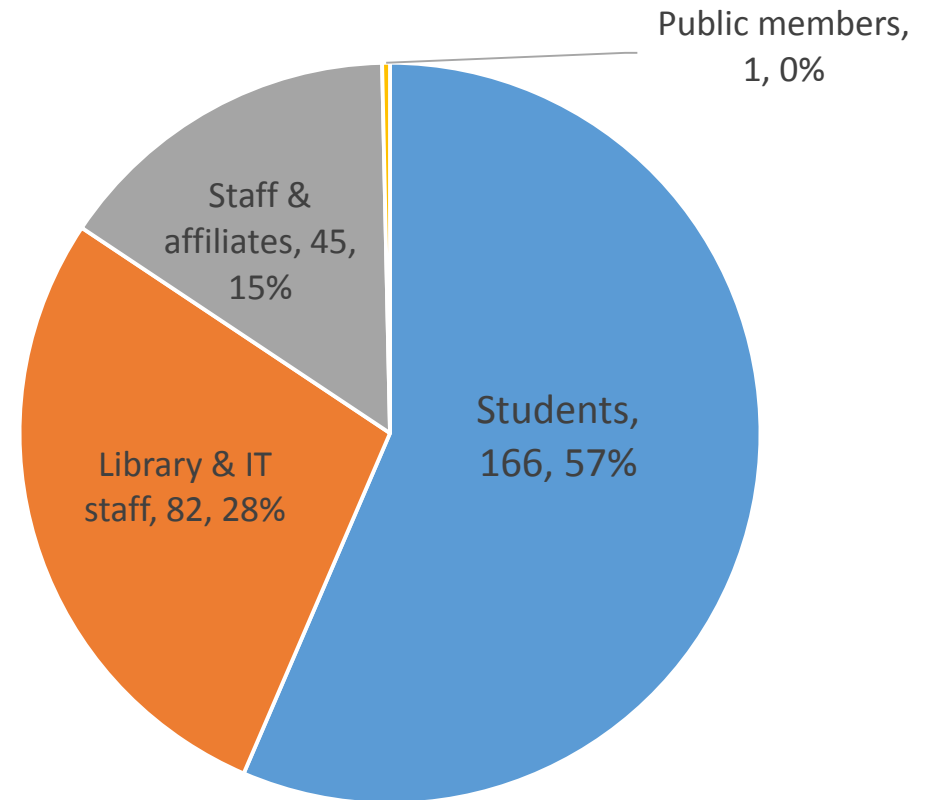Project extended to include LGBTQ+ book suggestions

Facts & figures

As of 16th May 2019, we have...

- 248 books in the collection
- Dewey numbers range from 152.46 (dealing with anxiety), through to 973.932092 OBA (Michelle Obama's autobiography, which has never stayed on the shelf longer than a day since we bought it in January!)
- 80 currently on loan (there has never been fewer than 70 books on loan from this collection since October 2018)
- Most popular book to date is "My sister the serial killer", borrowed 8 times since we bought it in January 2019

Loans to date

- 70% of the books have been borrowed at least once

- 294 separate loans since September – 118% of available books

- Only 19% of fiction in the main Dewey sequence borrowed in the same period!

- Loans mostly from students – and quite a lot from library staff!

- 15% of loans to students have been from Computing & Engineering or Applied Sciences students

Loan stats run on 16th May 2019

Public members, 1, 0%

Staff & affiliates, 45, 15%

Library & IT staff, 82, 28%

Students, 166, 57%

Evaluation

Two methods of evaluation used, in March-April 2019:

- Observations – an hour at a time, over a few weeks
- Exit surveys (with prize draw!) – 75 responses

Main findings: observations

- VERY few people stop to browse the shelves

- Most go straight from the library gates to the stairs

- Front-facing books get more attention

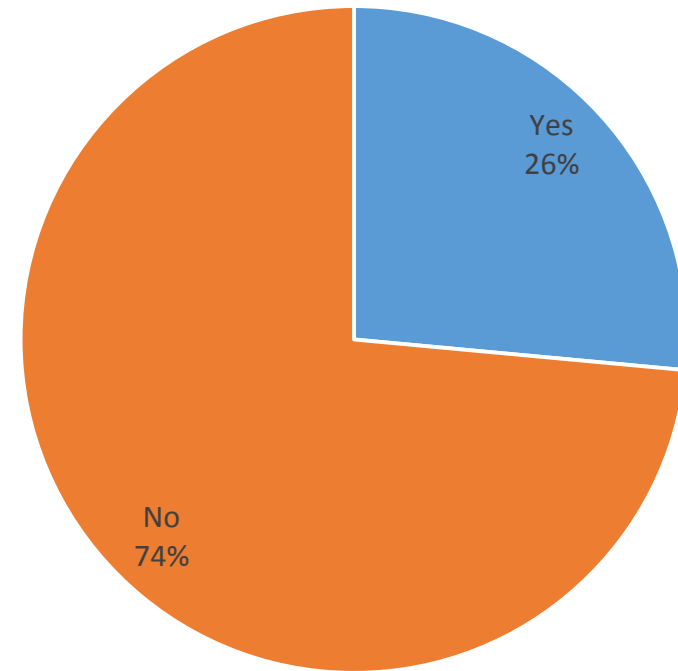- Feedback from desk staff: about 2-3 times per week, people ask what the books are for and how to borrow them

Main findings: exit surveys

Have you heard of HudReads?
- Yes 45%
- No 55%
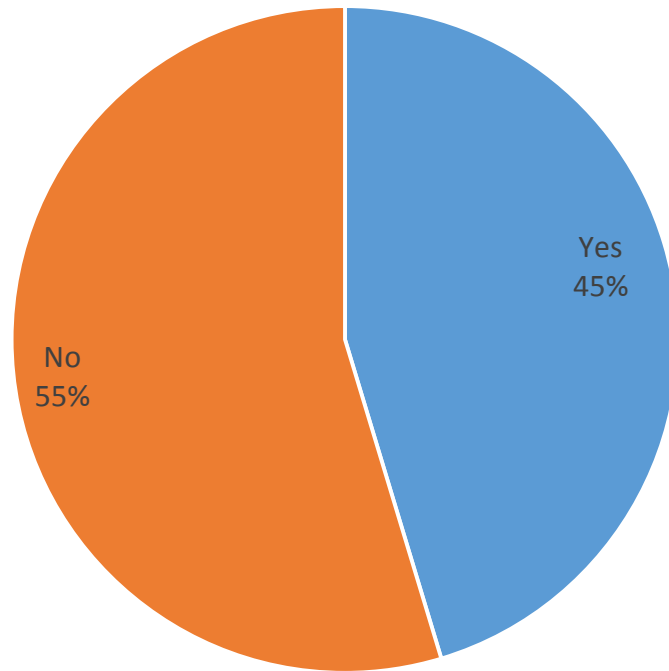
Have you borrowed from HudReads?
- Yes 26%
- No 74%

Comments

A great initiative, hope it's set to continue :)

It is a very good idea! I am going to use HudReads in future!

It could include more non-fiction

Need comics!

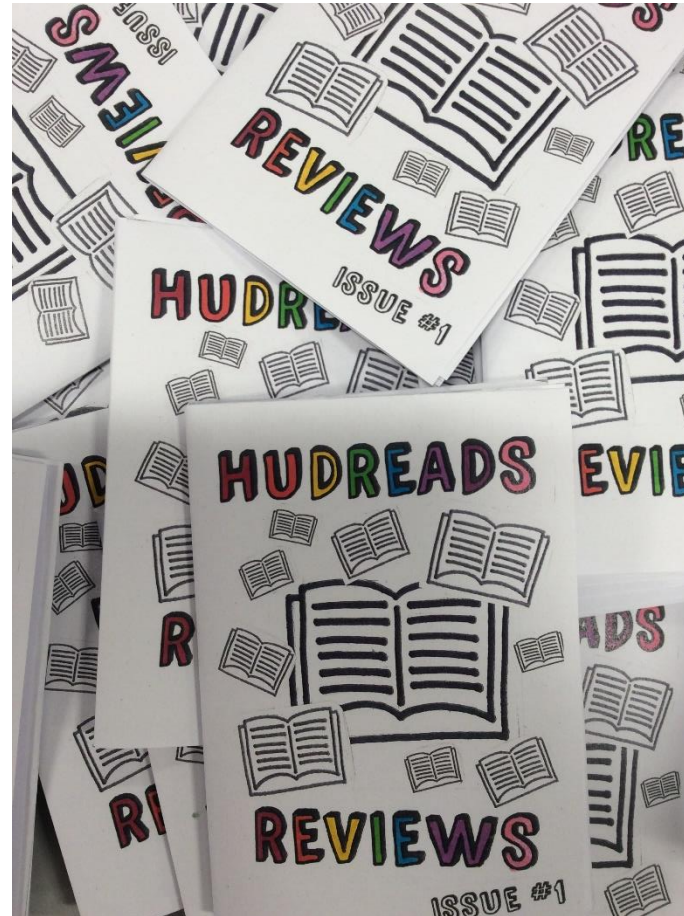Not heard of it but love reading. Add additional advertising for it

Really like this service as I am a big reader of fiction. Nice that our uni library does offer this, as I used to have to go to other libraries.

Newspaper/ Magazines?

Make non-academics a section to browse online as I don't always know what I want to read.

Future plans

- More promotion
- Better signage
- Bookmarks
- Zines!

My Chemical Romance

SMC4014-1819 : Recent Advances in Chemical Engineering

aka "The Book module"

> enhance students' communication skills and their knowledge of the world beyond university, by engaging, through reading, writing, listening and oral presentation, with material relevant to the evolving discipline and practice of chemical engineering, as the basis for establishing an attitude of life-long learning.

Librarian input

> Lecture on "Reading the book: why and how"

Impact 1 – Unexpected Proposal

Historically, the School of Chemical Sciences not forthcoming in engaging with information literacy

   1st year induction only

Academic approached librarian

   Building on module/ successful relationship at previous university

Reasonable free reign on how to approach the lecture

Impact 2 – Sharing the Literacy Love

Lecture directly contributed to assessed test on the content of the book and on the nature of books and reading (worth 10% of module mark)

Identifying features of the design of the physical book that have contributed to its fitness for purpose and resulting longevity.

Contrast reading from a screen compared with reading from print, why choose one over the other, i.e. advantages/ disadvantages of each.

From the point of view of the *author* or the *reader*, what are the merits and disadvantages of communicating through a book format in contrast with other forms of communication media?

Impact 3 – Deeper Understanding

The book design as a feat of successful engineering

The pros and cons of electronic & print books

The role of the book in sharing academic research

Using a codex is intuitive, with a self-evident functionality. Its simplicity allows all who use it to master it instantly.

E-books can be good and bad for the researchers since they can fast check in the abstract or contents page to find a 'big win' for what they are looking for but his can also distract them for looking the bigger picture and how the scientific information fits into the whole.

constructed perfectly for travelling as it is small and compact, allowing for easy concealment and storage...the text was able to remain intact throughout its journeys it would have gained favour with people and ultimately become the staple form of information transfer throughout the world due to its reliability.

Examples of test answers from the students

Impact 4 - Matchmaking

Introduced academic to our University Press

Resulting in publication featuring students' work

"outlet for the students' book reviews and topical review articles arising from the module"

Compliments current student research journal
https://www.fieldsjournal.org.uk/

Future together?

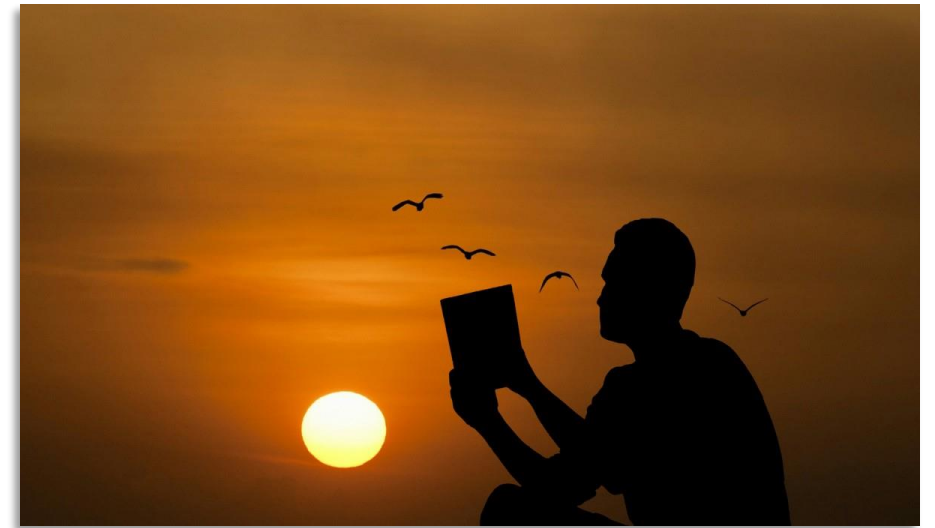
Module will run again next year

    Smaller cohort

    Change to lecture (librarian's choice, opportunity to set assessment questions)

    Idea to measure reading engagement at beginning and end of module

    Possible talk with academic at external event

Further reading

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