



# Close Reading Together: PASS as Reading Workshops in the GEFP

SZETO Wai Man, WONG Ka Tai Isaac, LI Ming Kenneth, WU Jun Vivian  
YIP Lo Ming Amber, LAI Ka Yu Ann, YU Chi Chung Andy and LEUNG Mei Yee

General Education Foundation Programme, Office of University General Education  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



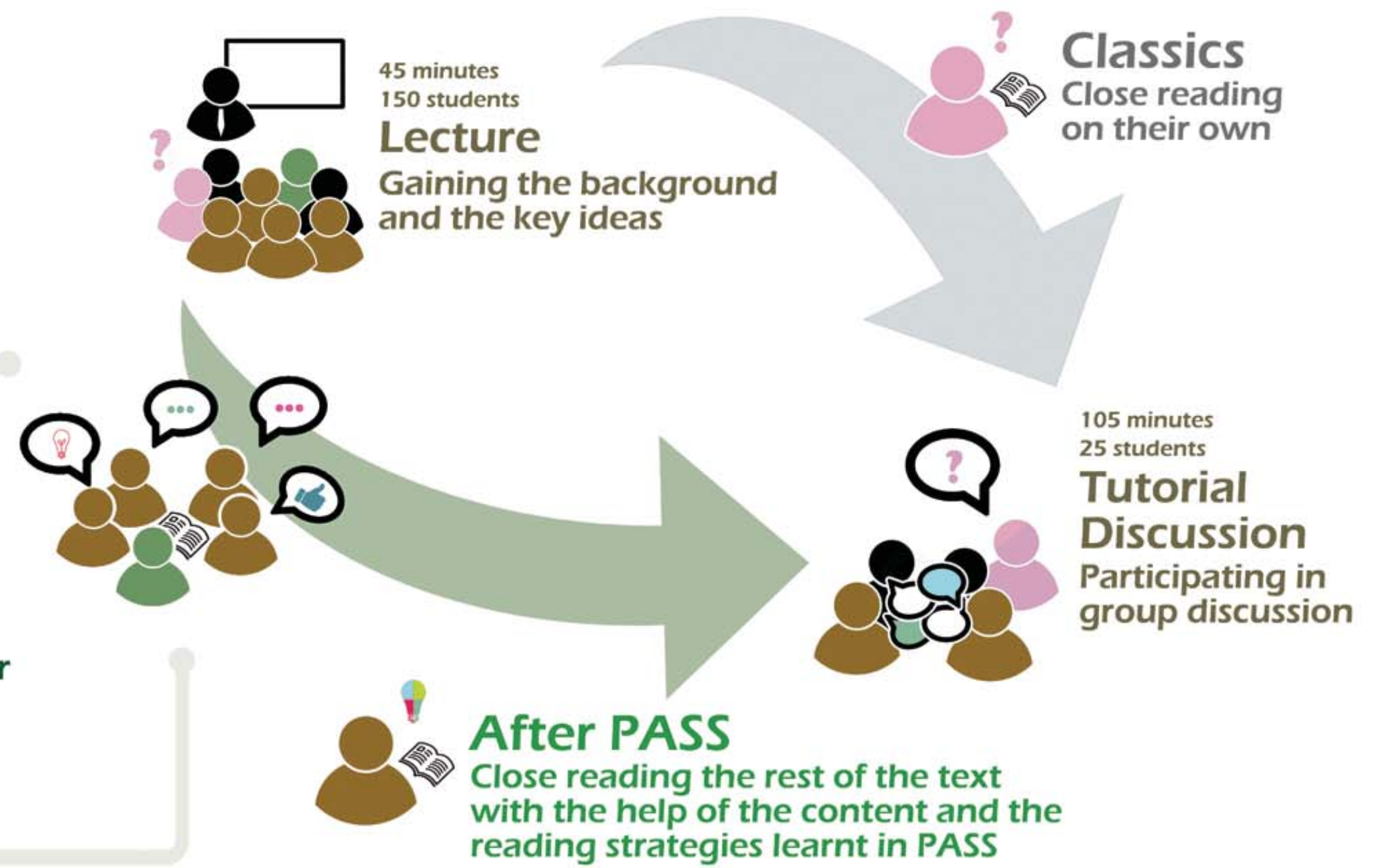
## GEFP General Education Foundation Programme

- Two common core courses
  - > Including
    - In Dialogue with Humanity & In Dialogue with Nature
  - > Focusing on reading classics
    - *The Analects, Republic, Bible, Qu'ran, The Social Contract, The Principia, On the Origin of Species, Silent Spring*
  - > Required for all undergraduate students (~3800 per year)

## PASS Peer Assisted Study Sessions as reading workshops

- One-hour and weekly voluntary study sessions led by PASS Leaders who are students previously excelled in the same course
- Providing a collaborative and supportive learning environment for students
  - > Practicing close reading of selected passages from a text together
    - Doing layered reading
    - Discussing text-dependent questions
  - > Learning reading strategies to read the rest of the text

## Mode of Study in a Week



## Close Reading in PASS

### Layered reading



### On the Origin of Species by Charles Darwin CHAPTER IV NATURAL SELECTION

How will the struggle for existence, discussed too briefly in the last chapter, act in regard to variation? Can the principle of selection, which we have seen is so potent in the hands of man, apply in nature? I think we shall see that it can act most effectually. Let it be borne in mind in what an endless number of strange peculiarities our domestic productions, and, in a lesser degree, those under nature, vary; and how strong the hereditary tendency is. Under domestication, it may be truly said that the whole organisation becomes in some degree plastic. Let it be borne in mind how infinitely complex and close-fitting are the mutual relations of all organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life. Can it, then, be thought improbable, seeing that variations useful to man have undoubtedly occurred, that other variations useful in some way to each being in the great and complex battle of life, should sometimes occur in the course of thousands of generations? If such do occur, can we doubt (remembering that many more individuals are born than can possibly survive) that individuals having any advantage, however slight, over others, would have the best chance of surviving and of procreating their kind? On the other hand, we may feel sure that any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed. This preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of injurious variations, I call Natural Selection. Variations neither useful nor injurious would not be affected by natural selection, and would be left a fluctuating element, as perhaps we see in the species called polymorphic.

### Text-dependent questions

- S**ummarizing: What is important?
- C**larifying: What does it mean?
- A**nalyzing: Why is it important? Why did the author say that?
- I**ntegrating: What are the global-level connections?

- According to the lecture, what is the term to describe the principle of selection in the hands of man?
- What does "organisation" mean here?
- How is it related to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*?
- Why did Darwin use "thousands of generations"?
- Why did Darwin ask us to remember "many more individuals are born than can possibly survive"?
- Can you explain the definition of natural selection by an example given in the lecture?
- What is the most important key term in this paragraph?

## Focus Group Study (2016-17)

### Close reading in PASS has helped students

#### Identify and connect major ideas

"The PASS Leader asked us to read and discuss particular paragraphs that helped us to locate the main ideas in the text."

"PASS helped me grasp the gist of each text and then I could understand how the other parts of the text related to it."

#### Become an independent reader

"The text became much easier to follow when I went through it on my own because an overall picture of it had already been drawn - with the most important things highlighted - during the PASS session."

#### Acquire and apply reading skills

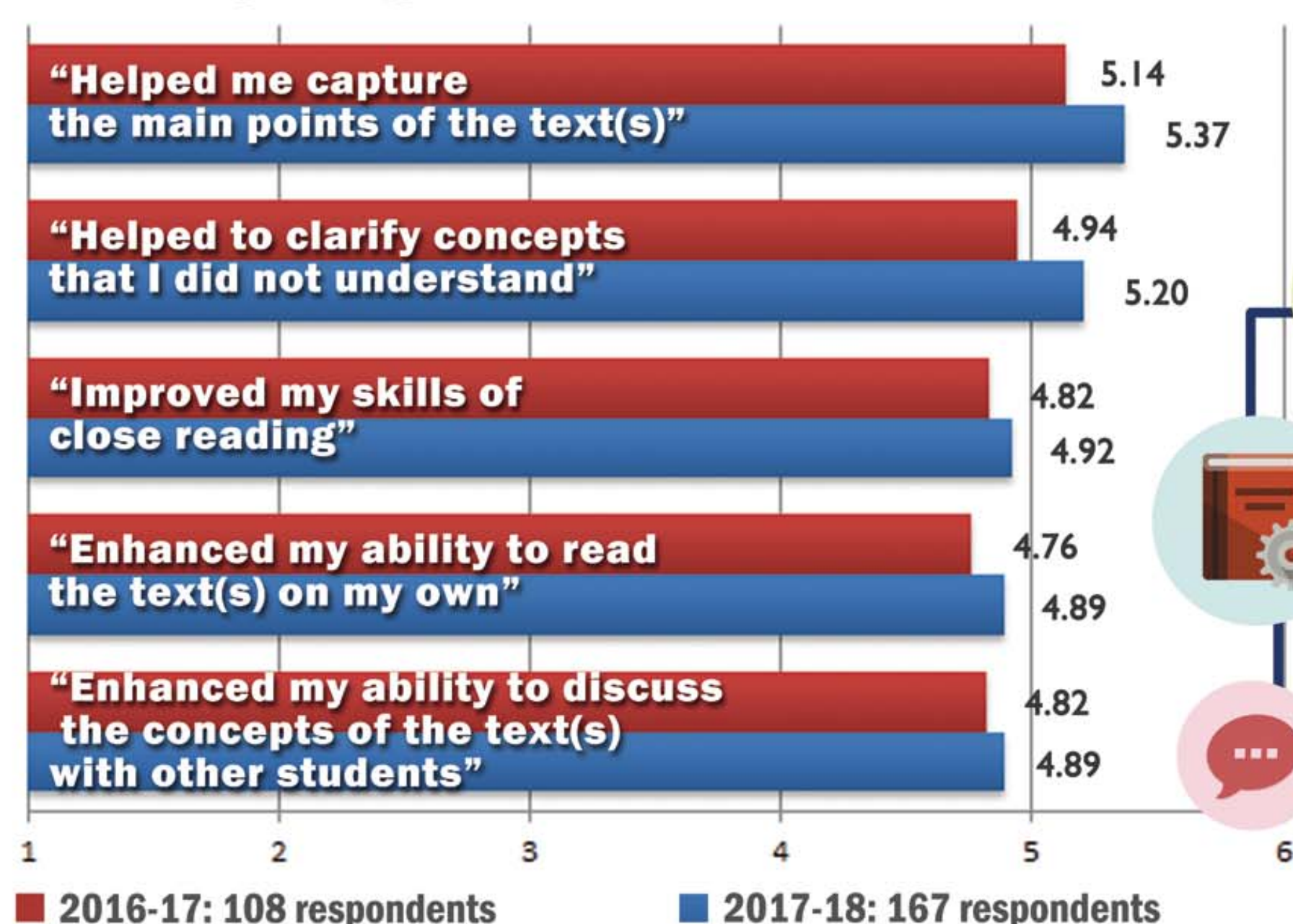
"I would adopt some of the reading skills the PASS leader told us: I would summarize the overall ideas of each paragraph before looking into the details."

#### Bridge the gap between lecture and tutorial

"The flow normally goes like this: the concepts are first explained briefly in the lecture. Then the entire text is gone through in detail in PASS. When it comes to the tutorial, more in-depth reflection is possible. Without PASS, what I can do is limited to reading the text on my own and memorizing these concepts, without realizing how these concepts work with each other."

## Survey (2016-17 & 2017-18) [Respondents attended >= 3 times]

### Participating in PASS has



### References

- Doolittle, P., Hicks, D., Triplett, C. F., Nichols, W. & Young, C. A. (2006). Reciprocal teaching for reading comprehension in higher education: A strategy for fostering the deeper understanding of texts. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 17(2), 106-118.
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### Acknowledgement

- This project is supported by the Teaching Development and Language Enhancement Grant from The Chinese University of Hong Kong.