



# Enhance students' engagement with course material via social annotation



Image by ijeab on Freepik



**McGill**

Teaching and  
Learning Services

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## Land acknowledgment



McGill

Teaching and  
Learning Services





## Chat question

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How do *you* get students to engage with course content?



# Session outcomes



**Describe** key considerations when designing social (collaborative) annotation assignments

**Implement** social annotation assignments to support collaborative engagement with course content using Perusall



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What is social annotation?

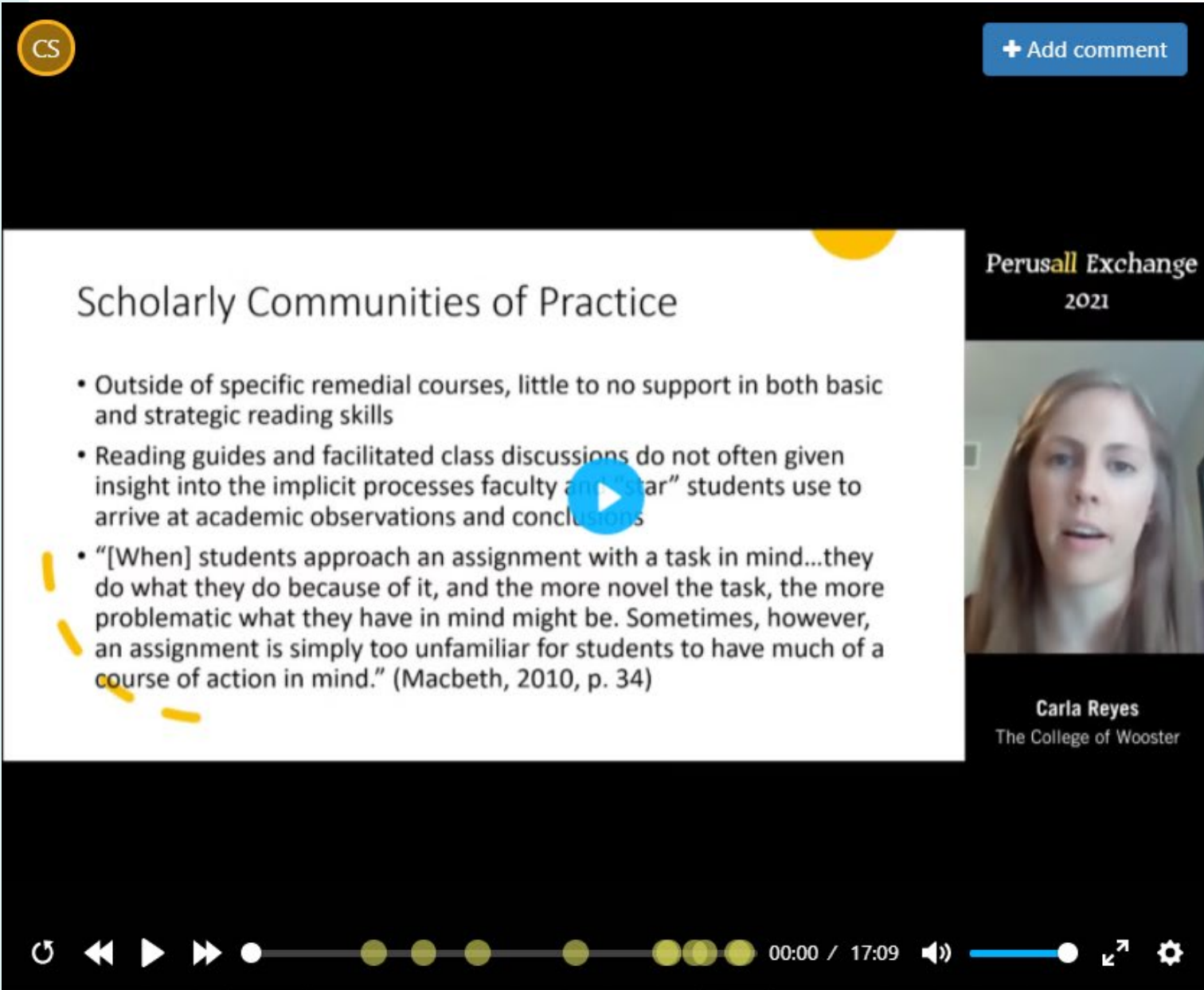
What does  
SA look like?



- Watch the video.
- Answer the questions.



# What does SA look like?



The screenshot shows a video player interface. On the left, a presentation slide titled "Scholarly Communities of Practice" is displayed. The slide contains three bullet points. A blue play button is overlaid on the slide. On the right, a video feed shows a woman with long brown hair, identified as Carla Reyes from The College of Wooster. Above the video feed is the text "Perusall Exchange 2021". At the top right of the video player is a blue button that says "+ Add comment". At the bottom of the video player is a playback control bar with a progress bar, volume icon, and settings icon. The progress bar shows the video is at 00:00 / 17:09.

CS

## Scholarly Communities of Practice

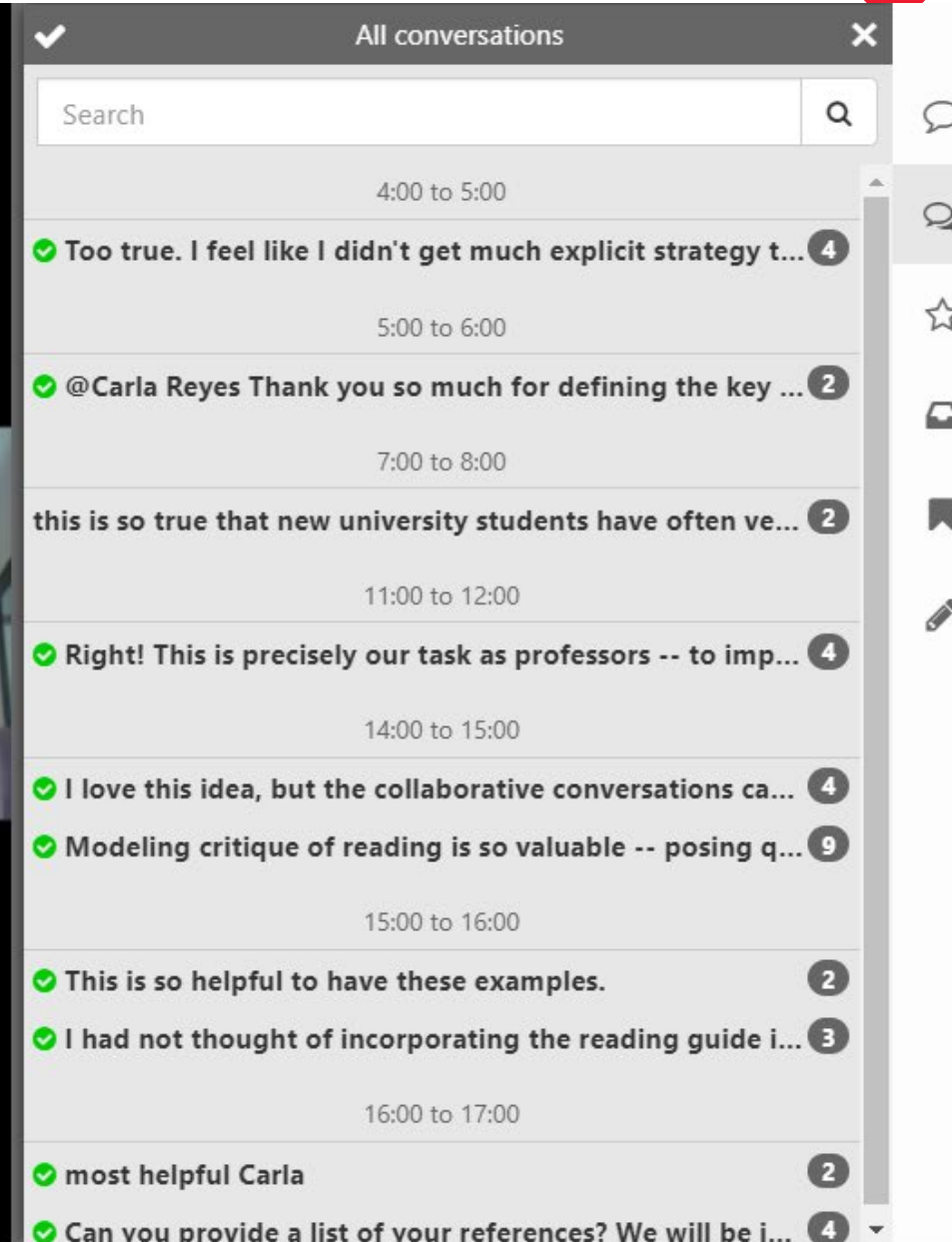
- Outside of specific remedial courses, little to no support in both basic and strategic reading skills
- Reading guides and facilitated class discussions do not often given insight into the implicit processes faculty and "star" students use to arrive at academic observations and conclusions
- "[When] students approach an assignment with a task in mind...they do what they do because of it, and the more novel the task, the more problematic what they have in mind might be. Sometimes, however, an assignment is simply too unfamiliar for students to have much of a course of action in mind." (Macbeth, 2010, p. 34)

Perusall Exchange  
2021

Carla Reyes  
The College of Wooster

+ Add comment

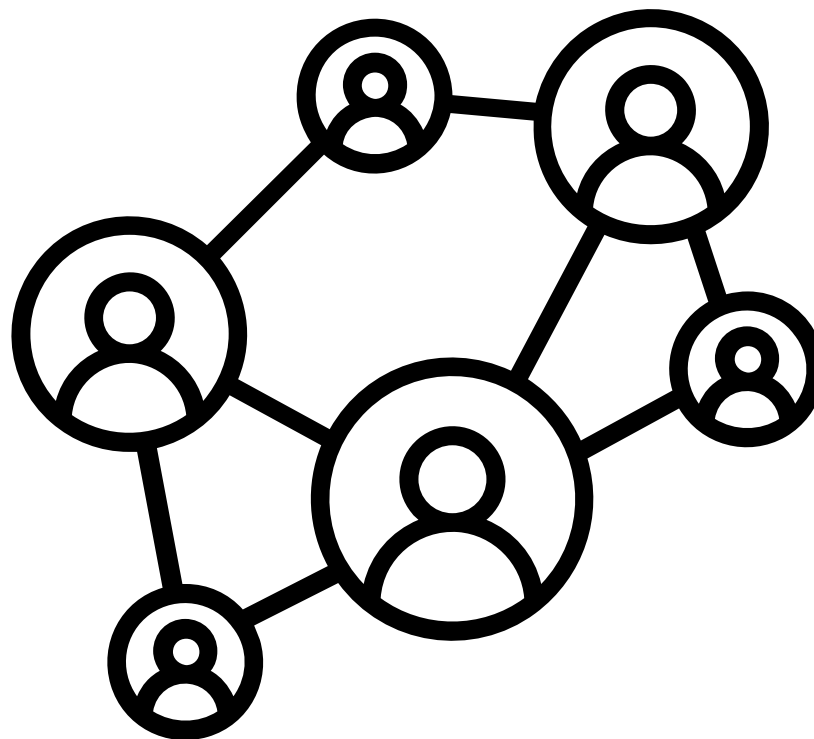
00:00 / 17:09



The screenshot shows a chat interface titled "All conversations". It features a search bar at the top. Below the search bar, there is a list of conversations organized by time slots. Each conversation entry includes a green checkmark, a snippet of the message, and a number in a circle indicating the number of replies. The conversations are as follows:

- 4:00 to 5:00: Too true. I feel like I didn't get much explicit strategy t... 4
- 5:00 to 6:00: @Carla Reyes Thank you so much for defining the key ... 2
- 7:00 to 8:00: this is so true that new university students have often ve... 2
- 11:00 to 12:00: Right! This is precisely our task as professors -- to imp... 4
- 14:00 to 15:00: I love this idea, but the collaborative conversations ca... 4
- 14:00 to 15:00: Modeling critique of reading is so valuable -- posing q... 9
- 15:00 to 16:00: This is so helpful to have these examples. 2
- 15:00 to 16:00: I had not thought of incorporating the reading guide i... 3
- 16:00 to 17:00: most helpful Carla 2
- 16:00 to 17:00: Can you provide a list of your references? We will be i... 4

# Social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978)





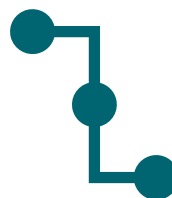
# Why use SA?



build  
community



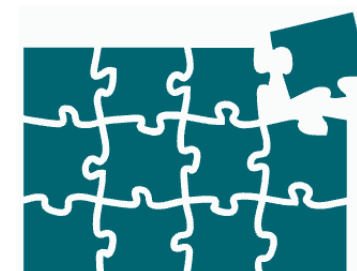
address  
misconceptions



link  
concepts



critically  
analyze  
materials



raise awareness  
about structure

(Adams & Wilson, 2020; d'Entremont & Eyking, 2021; Kalir et al., 2020)





## Chat question

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What might you draw from the examples to design and implement a social annotation assignment for your students?





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# Design



# Recommended practices for implementation

- ❑ Consider whether you will assess students' contributions to SA assignments



Align assessment with learning outcomes



Focus on formative feedback (low stakes) /  
assessment for learning

(Brown & Croft, 2020; Novak et al., 2012; Suhre et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020)



# Recommended practices for implementation

- ❑ Align SA assignments with course learning outcomes

## Example outcomes

- Describe the structure of the [discourse / work]
- Identify flaws in arguments
- Evaluate evidence
- Work collaboratively in a group setting

(Brown & Croft, 2020; Novak et al., 2012; Suhre et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020)



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# Implementation



# McGill Supported SA Tool

# Perusall

The screenshot displays the Perusall interface. On the left, a document is open with several paragraphs of text. Key phrases are highlighted in yellow and pink. On the right, a chat window titled "Current conversation" shows a discussion between students. The chat includes a question from a student (LM) and a detailed response from another student (YH) discussing group objectives and altruism. A third student's comment is partially visible at the bottom.

Document text (highlighted in yellow and pink):

... of individuals will act to achieve their com-  
 ...ts, far from being a logical implication of the  
 ... individuals in a group will rationally further  
 ...sts, is in fact inconsistent with that assumption.  
 ...ll be explained in the following chapter.  
 ... large group rationally seek to maximize their  
 ...y will *not* act to advance their common or  
 ...ss there is coercion to force them to do so, or  
 ...ncentive, distinct from the achievement of the  
 ...erest, is offered to the members of the group  
 ...ndition that they help bear the costs or burdens  
 ...vement of the group objectives. Nor will such  
 ...ganizations to further their common goals in  
 ...rcion or the separate incentives just mentioned.  
 ...e even when there is unanimous agreement in a  
 ...non good and the methods of achieving it.  
 ...w, common throughout the social sciences, that  
 ...er their interests, is accordingly unjustified, at  
 ... , as it usually is, on the (sometimes implicit)  
 ...ps act in their self-interest because individuals  
 ...ically the logical possibility that groups com-  
 ...stic individuals or irrational individuals may  
 ...ir common or group interests. But, as later,

Chat window "Current conversation":

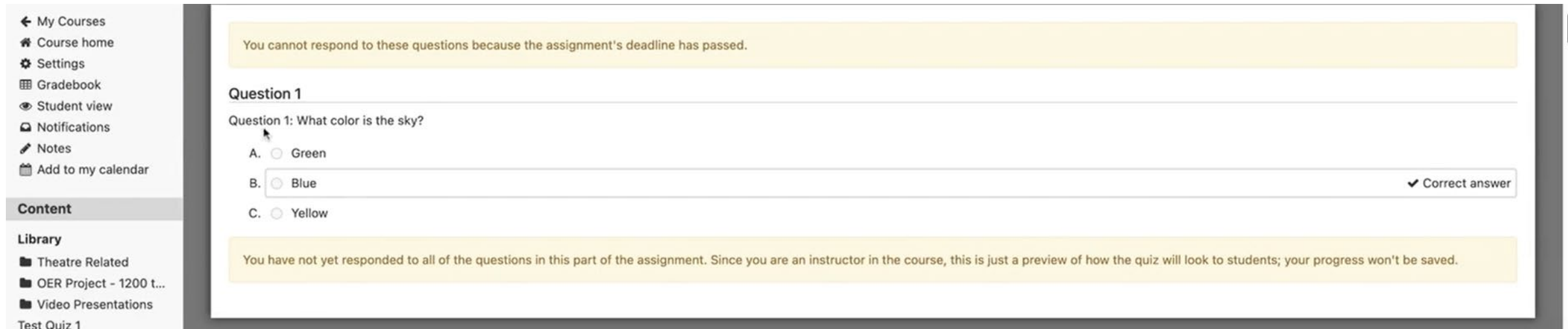
LM: So, does this negate the concept that people do things "for the common good" - if so, is altruism nonexistent?

YH: guess the answer depends on the cause that a group is fighting for. In another comment, [redacted] used a great example with LGBTQ+ movements. While many participants don't necessarily identify as being part of the LGBTQ+ community and as a result will not benefit from achieving that group's goals, they still fight to achieve those goals. We could call their participation altruistic in that the intention behind their participation isn't to serve their own personal interests.

[Redacted]: I would agree! I think it's also interesting to look at the layers of the intention behind supporting a goal one does not directly benefit from. While I am queer, I can definitely see how allies of the LGBTQ+ community would join

# What's cool in Perusall for instructors?

- Automated student grouping for large classes
- Confusion reports
- Quizzes

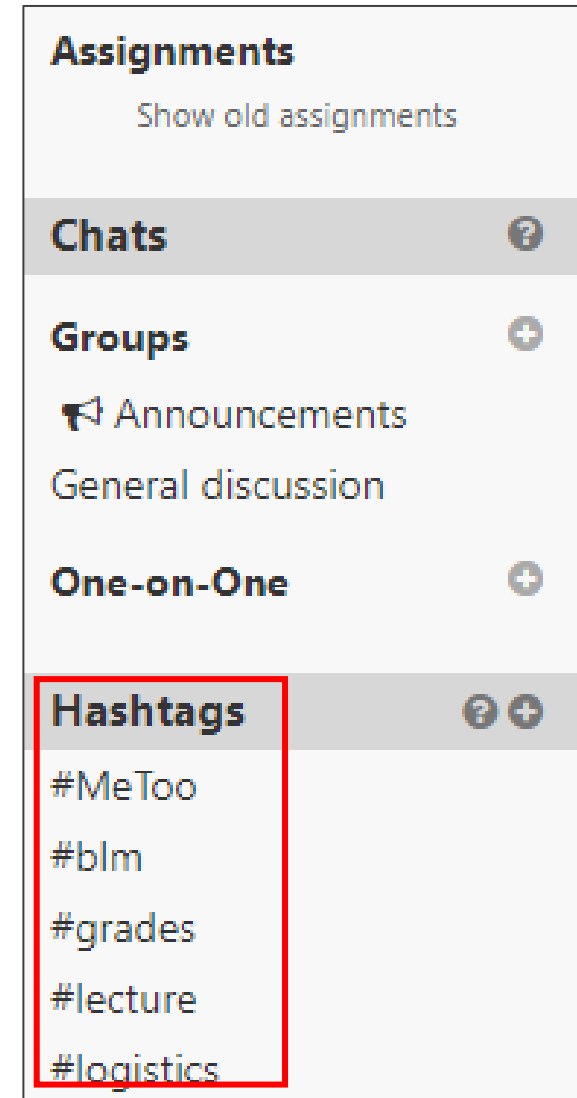
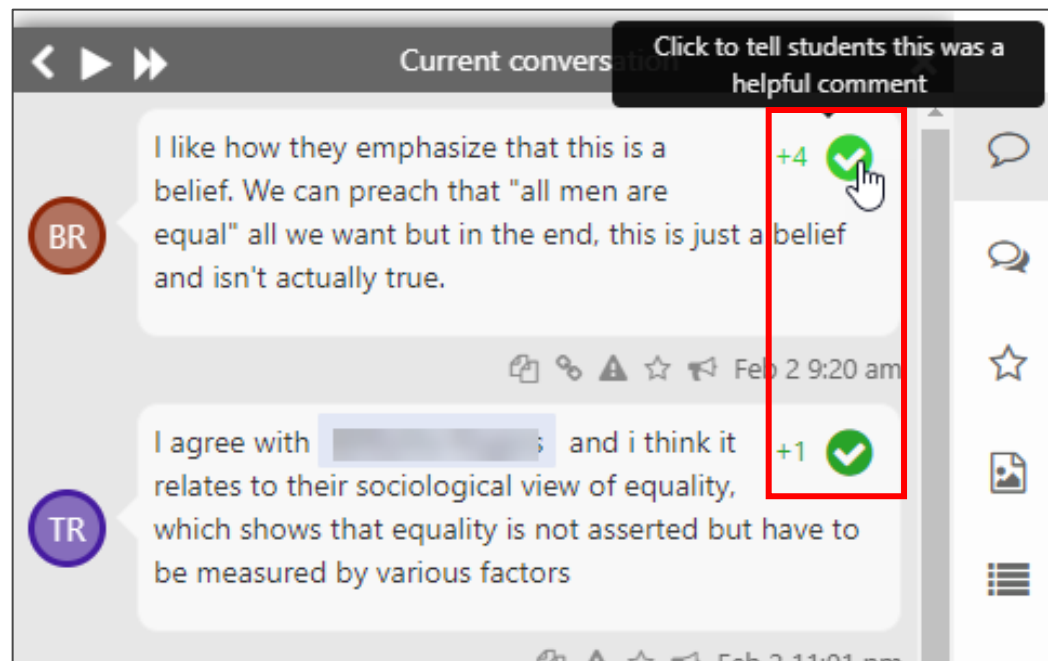


The screenshot displays a Perusall quiz interface. On the left is a navigation sidebar with options: My Courses, Course home, Settings, Gradebook, Student view, Notifications, Notes, and Add to my calendar. Below this is a 'Content' section with a 'Library' containing Theatre Related, OER Project - 1200 t..., and Video Presentations. The main area shows a message: 'You cannot respond to these questions because the assignment's deadline has passed.' Below this is 'Question 1' with the text 'Question 1: What color is the sky?'. Three multiple-choice options are listed: A. Green, B. Blue, and C. Yellow. Option B is selected, and a 'Correct answer' indicator is visible. A final message at the bottom states: 'You have not yet responded to all of the questions in this part of the assignment. Since you are an instructor in the course, this is just a preview of how the quiz will look to students; your progress won't be saved.'



# What's cool in Perusall for students?

- Hashtags and upvoting
- “Read aloud” accessibility





# Perusall assignment “flow”

Add to myCourses



Instructor creates assignment in Perusall



Students access assignment through Content in myCourses



Students interact with material and highlight, comment or respond to each other



Perusall auto-grades assignment based on algorithm



Grade is passed back to myCourses gradebook



# Next steps



**Register for upcoming sessions**

[www.mcgill.ca/tls/events](http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/events)



**Access resources**

[www.mcgill.ca/teachingkb](http://www.mcgill.ca/teachingkb)

[www.mcgill.ca/tls](http://www.mcgill.ca/tls)

[teachingblog.mcgill.ca](http://teachingblog.mcgill.ca)



**Connect with a colleague**



**Book a consultation**

<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/contact/consultations>





## Chat question

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What is one thing from today's webinar that you plan to act on?

