VU Reading Lists

Manual for

Teachers & Support Staff

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1 Introduction

1.1 Notes about this manual

This is a manual for teachers and support staff who have just started using or intend to start using VU Reading Lists. Although everyone has their own preferred way of working, the manual intends to match as much as possible how teachers and support staff are likely to use the VU Reading Lists manager.

Be aware that this a manual to get you started with VU Reading Lists; it is not an exhaustive reference work for the application. The support pages of application's developer are much more complete; you can find them on support.talis.com.

If you have questions, or if you have suggestions for improvements for this manual, please contact us at steunpuntleermaterialen.ub@vu.nl.

Note that this manual assumes that you have a working knowledge of *Canvas*, the virtual learning environment used at VU. If you're new to Canvas, please follow the course Getting To Know Canvas - Teachers first.

1.2 What is *VU Reading Lists*?

VU Reading Lists is an online reading list manager that is integrated with Canvas and with the University Library's catalogue system. This tool helps teachers to organize, manage and share course literature and other sources of educational materials with students or colleagues.

The VU Reading Lists manager provides students with an intuitive interface where they can find, manage and access the educational materials. It gives students access to these lists in a single place.

The tool gives teachers a way of presenting their students with lists of educational materials by providing links to digital learning materials in the university library (such as e-books and digital journal articles), as well as external sources such as open educational resources, multimedia and websites. It also offers teachers full control over the layout of these list so that they can tailor them to reflect the content and structure of their Canvas courses.

1.3   Why should I use VU Reading Lists?

VU Reading Lists have certain advantages over other ways of presenting course literature, both for teachers and students.

1.3.1   Advantages of VU Reading Lists for teachers

- Comply with the rules regarding copyright in education.
- Easily inform students about what they should read and when they should read it.
- Manage course literature directly from Canvas.
- Simple and intuitive application. Teachers can organise lists in the way that best suits the course's Canvas module as well as their students' needs.
- Add notes for your students, such as: "Read chapters 1-3".
- Easily collaborate with colleagues, share lists and manage the saved articles, books or web pages.
- Direct contact with the University Library and your faculty's collection specialist for questions about resources by adding a note in a VU Reading List.

1.3.2   Advantages of VU Reading Lists for students

- All relevant literature for their course is collected in one place – the VU Reading List manager – and easily shared in Canvas.
- Direct access to the learning materials.
- Manage their literature and study goals in the VU Reading Lists manager, and add their personal notes on the items in the reading lists for their courses.
- Save literature for later by adding it to their personal bookmarks in the VU Reading Lists manager.

1.4   Need help?

The library has educational support staff who can help you to using VU Reading Lists, such as:

- Setting up a VU Reading List for your course,
- Providing training and support to faculty's teaching staff,
- Checking for digitally available versions of literature.

Contact the Education Support Centre or your faculty's Subject Librarian for more information.

2   Getting started with VU Reading Lists

2.1   Logging in

Navigate to vu.rl.talis.com and log in with your VUnet-ID (via SURFconext). This takes you to the VU Reading Lists home screen (Figure 1). Here you find the Main menu, the search bar to search for reading lists, as well as important notifications.
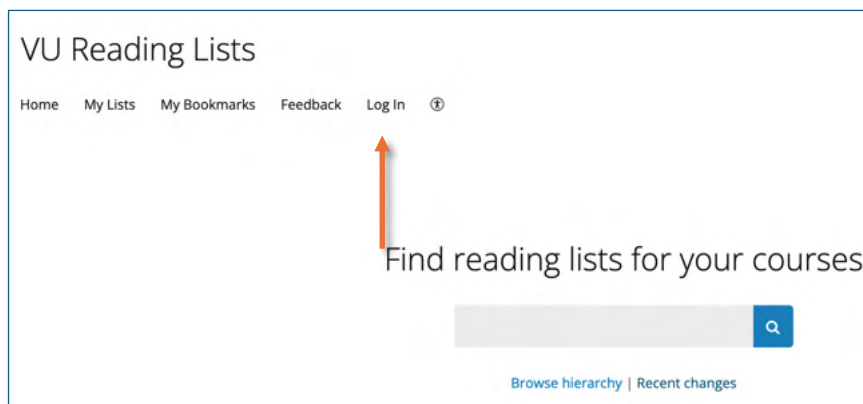

Figure 1 VU Reading Lists login screen

2.2   Your profile

After you have logged in, you can see your profile overview by clicking on your name and choosing *View Profile* (Figure 2). You can then adjust your profile details by clicking on the *Edit Profile* button.
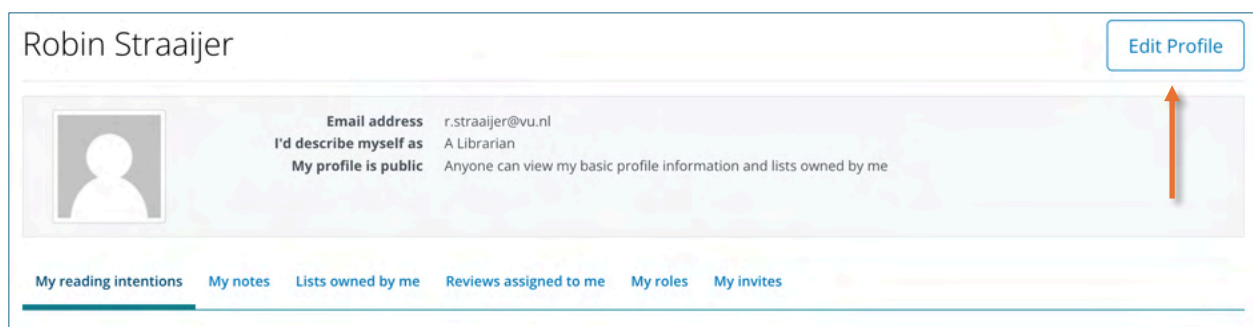

Figure 2 VU Reading Lists profile page

In the *Edit Profile* menu you can:

- Make your profile public for all users of VU Reading Lists or keep it private,
- View your reading intentions,
- View all the notes you've created,
- View the lists you own,
- View your roles and received invitations.

2.3   The bookmarking tool

The *Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking* browser extension offers the easiest way to add new items to your reading list. We suggest you therefore download the bookmarking tool before you start making your VU Reading Lists. This tool is available for Chrome and Microsoft Edge, Firefox, and Safari.

Once you have installed the Talis Aspire Bookmarking Tool in your browser of choice, pin the extension to your toolbar for easy access. The first time you click on the *Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking* tool in your browser you need to select and save your settings. Choose "VU University Amsterdam" and log in with your VUnetID (Figure 3).
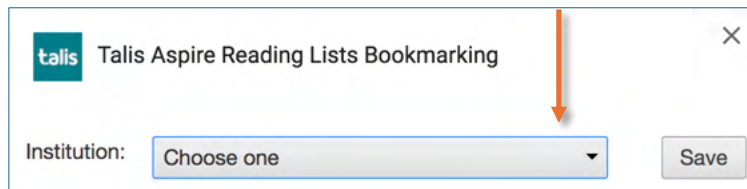

Figure 3 Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking browser extension activation pop-up

 After registering your institution (Vrije Universiteit), you can use the bookmarking extension every time by simply clicking on it from your browser's toolbar.

3 Creating your VU Reading Lists

3.1 Creating a new list

To create a new list, start by choosing *My Lists* from the Main menu on the VU Reading Lists home screen (Figure 4). Here your find your published lists and draft lists. Start a new list simply by clicking the *Create new list* button at the top right side of the screen.
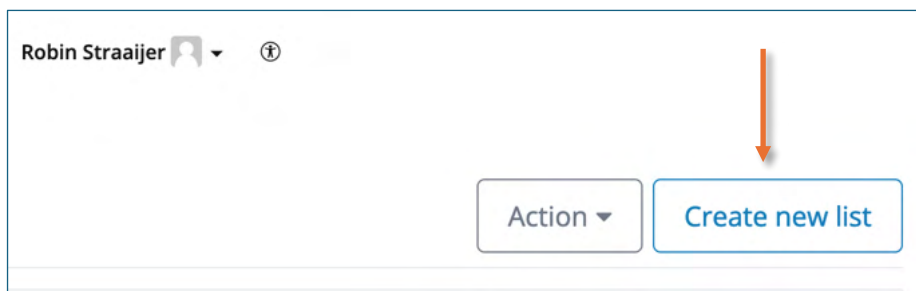

Figure 4 Detail of the My Lists *main screen*

3.2 Adding list details

The *Create new list* button creates a new list and opens a separate window (see Figure 5) in which you can enter the relevant details for your VU Reading List.

Then click *Save*. You have now created your first VU Reading List!

Figure 5 Reading list details screen

To help students find the right VU Reading Lists for their courses, follow these guidelines when completing this window.

- For the title of your VU Reading List, use name and course code of the corresponding Canvas course, for example "S_PRRM1 | Public Relation and Reputation Management".
- At 'Description', add a description of the course that includes all relevant information. A good way to keep consistency is filling in this field by copy-pasting this information from the course description on Canvas.
- Connect your list to the appropriate programme through *Select Hierarchy*. If your programme is not listed here, please report it to steunpuntleermaterialen.ub@vu.nl and skip this step.
- Choose the relevant time period in which the course runs under 'Academic Year'.

4 Building your VU Reading List

4.1 Building your reading list

After creating your list, the empty list is now open (Figure 6). Note the yellow alert telling you that your list has not yet been published; it is still in draft. Changes will be saved automatically, but you will need to publish them to make them visible to your students or colleagues.
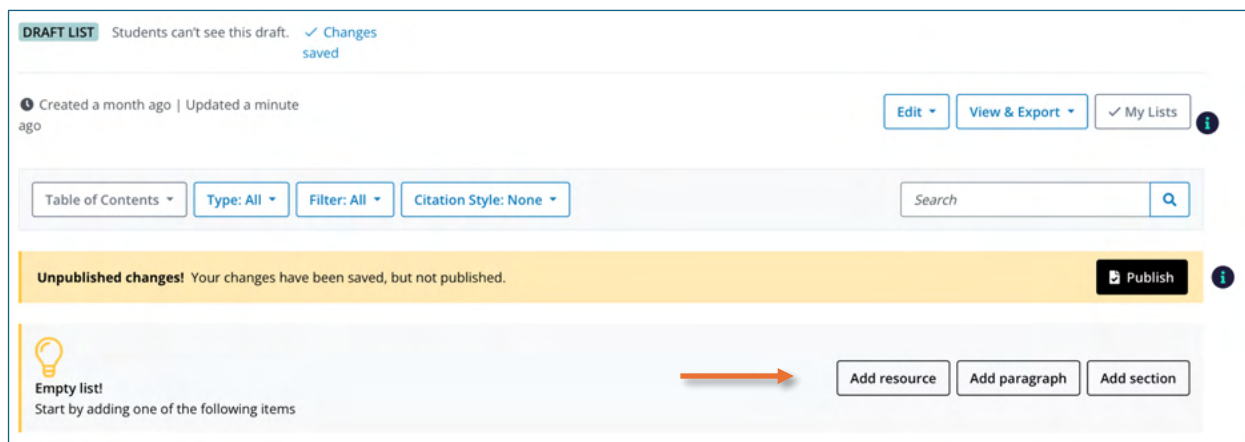

Figure 6 Empty VU Reading List with filters and action buttons

You can start building your list by using the three buttons at the bottom of the empty list.

- *Add resource* adds a source to the list. This source can be a book, article, video or webpage, basically anything that can be accessed via a hyperlink. These sources will form the main content of your list. Adding resources is explained more fully below.
- *Add paragraph* allows you a add a paragraph of text to your reading list. You can use paragraphs for whatever you need. Remember that paragraphs are purely informative; they do not contain clickable content or add any interactive structure (just visual structure).
- *Add section* allows you to create sections and sub-sections in your VU Reading Lists. Using sections is very useful as list sections (and sub-sections) can be individually added to your Canvas courses. Using sections gives you a lot of flexibility in using your VU Reading List in Canvas.

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4.2   Adding resources

There are a couple of different ways to add resources to your VU Reading List:

- Using *Add resource* in the reading list,
- Using the browser extension,
- Creating an item manually,
- Importing bookmarks from a RIS-file.

Each of these leads to the same result but has its own advantages and disadvantages, though there is a lot of overlap in how they function. They are explained in the following sections.

4.2.1   Using *Add resource* in the reading list.

The *Add resource* function is the basic way to add resources to your list. This function really works best if the resource is also in the University library's catalogue.

This function only shows up in the form of a separate button when your list is still empty. If you already have items in your list, it will appear when you hover your cursor over the top or bottom of an item, paragraph or section (see Figure 8). The functions *Add paragraph* and *Add section* work in the same way.

Clicking *Add resource* opens the pop-up search screen (Figure 7). The search bar in this screen is basically the same search bar as the one on the University Library's webpage: it gives you access to the University Library's entire catalogue.

Figure 7 The Add resource *search screen with* My bookmarks *and* Library search *sections*

Under the heading MY BOOKMARKS at the top you will see the sources you have previously added (of course this list will be empty if you are making your first item in your first list). Below the bookmarked suggestions, under the heading LIBRARY SEARCH, you will find the search results returned from the University Library's catalogue.

After you have found your desired resource, simply click *Add to list* to add the item to your reading list (Figure 8). By default, items are added to the list you're currently working with.
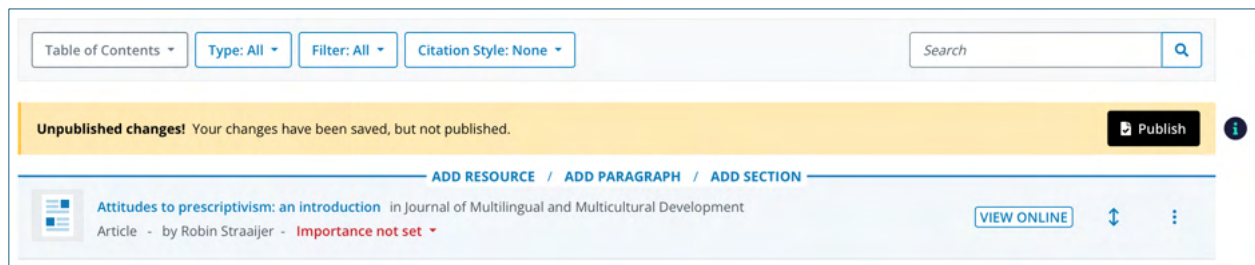

Figure 8 VU Reading List with first item added

Any item you add will also be added to your Bookmarks. This way, you can easily add the same resource to another list. You can access your bookmarks from the Main menu option *My Bookmarks* (see Figure1).

Clicking on the title of the item shows more details, most notably the availability of the source at the University Library, including buttons with links to its original location (Figure 9). This view is also what students will see when they use that VU Reading List and click on the item. You collapse this view by clicking on the title again.
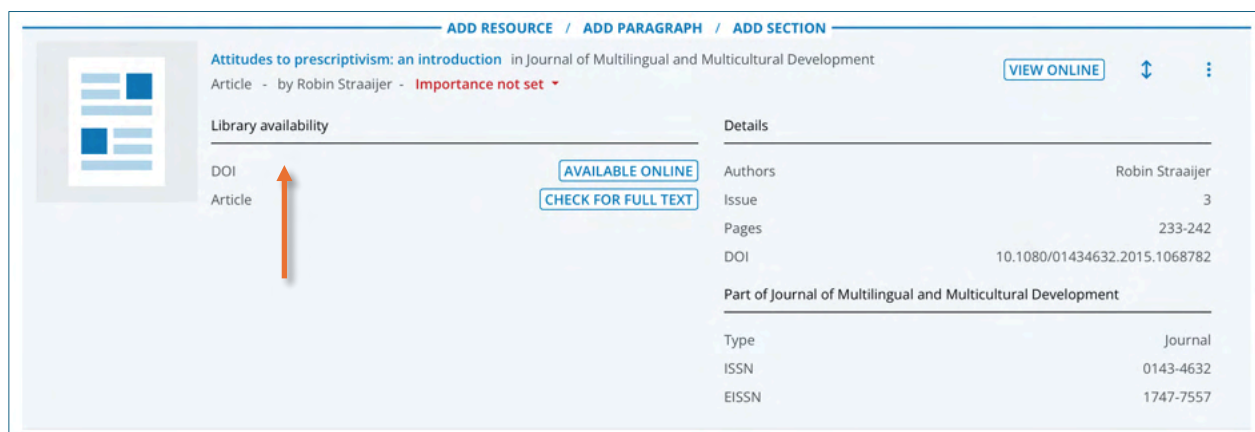

Figure 9 Detail view of a VU Reading List item

The red text "Importance not set" indicates that you have not yet indicated to the students what the importance of this item in the list is. There are three levels of importance:

- Required reading,
- Recommended reading,
- Optional reading.

Setting an importance is not required.

Note: The importance label *Required reading* should only be used for official exam literature!

4.2.2   Using the bookmarking tool

The *Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking* browser extension is probably the easiest way to add any resource to your VU Reading List. The source can be anything on the internet, an academic publication found on the internet (for example with Google Scholar), a news item on a website, a blogpost, or a video – on YouTube, for example (see Figure 10).
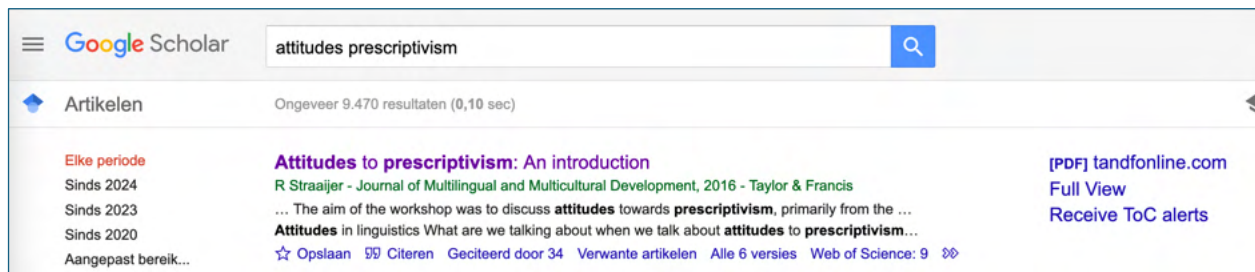

Figure 10 Google Scholar search results

Once you have found your publication, import the source by clicking the *Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking* browser extension from your browser's toolbar (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Adding a publication using the Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking *browser extension*

Running the extension opens a window showing the metadata imported by the tool (Figure 12).

Figure 12 The bookmarking tool's metadata window

In this window you can check and – where necessary – adjust the information for the resource you're importing into your reading list. The same goes for other tabs in this window.

If you need to add a field with metadata, such as a missing author for example, select the required type of metadata from the *Add field* dropdown menu and click *Add*. The metadata field will then appear in the list of metadata where you can enter its value – in the case of this example, the name of the missing author.

Click *Create* to add the item to your Bookmarks, or click *Create & Add to List* to add the item to your Bookmarks and your list. When you choose *Create & Add to List*, a new pop-up will open in which you can choose in which list and where in the list you will add the item (Figure 13).

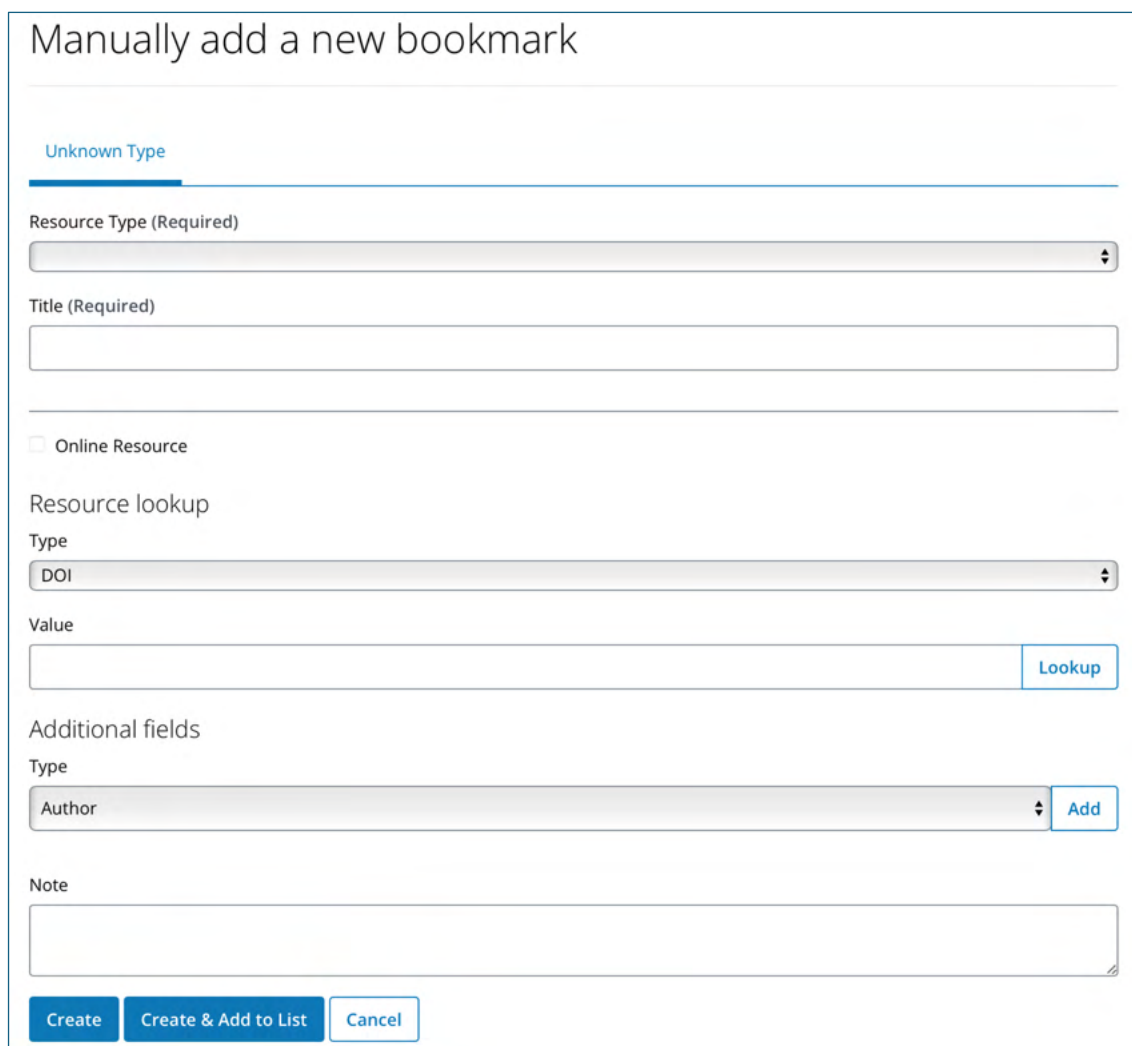*Figure 13 Create & Add to list option menu*

This menu also allows you to add a note for your students, such as "Read chapters 3 and 4", set the item's importance, or add a note for the University Library, for example asking about the items availability. The *Note for library* will be picked up by your faculty's subject librarian, who can contact you with information or to discuss possible options.

4.2.3   Creating an item manually

This way to add a resource should never be your go-to method of adding resources. It should only be used for sources you cannot find online.

However, you should know how this function works because you may need it to adjust the information in sources you add via the *Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking* browser extension, or use it to add your own material to a VU Reading List (see above).

Creating an item manually starts the same way as adding a resource from within the list by clicking on *Add resource*. Instead of using the search bar, scroll to the bottom of the pop-up search screen and click on the link *Create manually*. This opens a new screen, *Manually add a new bookmark* (Figure 14).

Figure 14 Manually adding a new resource

Note that the *Talis Aspire Reading Lists Bookmarking* browser extension will also take you to this screen, but it will then include the name of the source from which you're importing the resource, and also show the imported metadata from the source.

4.2.4   Importing bookmarks

The a fourth way to add items to your VU Reading List. In this way you can actually add an entire batch of sources. This can be useful if you have already made a list of course literature in your personal reference manager.

Start by going into the Bookmarks menu on the Main page of VU Reading Lists by clicking the *My Bookmarks* option in the main menu at the top (Figure 15).
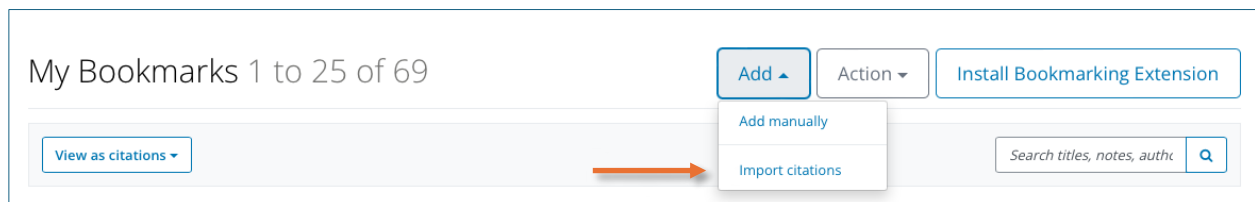

Figure 15 The Add *options in the* My Bookmarks *menu*

You will need to have the sources ready in a RIS-file (you can prepare such a file in your reference manager). Then choose *Import citations* and upload your RIS-file (Figure 16).
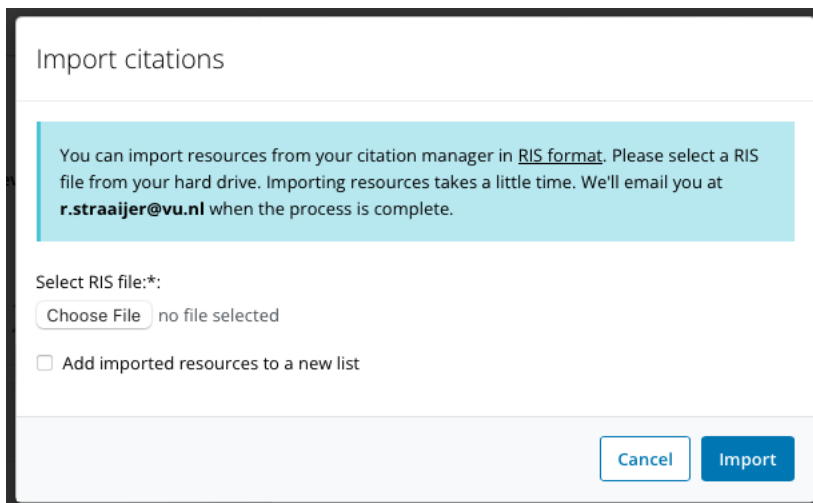

Figure 16 The import citations pop-up window

You also have the option to also directly add the imported sources to an existing reading list.

4.3 Using sections in your reading list

As mentioned, sections in your reading list are very useful. Since list sections (and sub-sections) can be individually added to your Canvas courses, using sections gives you a lot of flexibility in using your reading lists in Canvas, such as being able to mirror the structure of the Canvas course.

To create a section, start by clicking option *Add section* in the reading list (see Figure 9). Enter the title of the section and a short description (Figure 17), and click *Save*.

Figure 17 Adding a section to a reading list

You add new items to a new section with the button *Add resource*, after which you follow the steps in section 4.2. Existing items can be added to a new section by dragging them into the section using the double-arrow dragging handles; the section is indicated by the large square brackets (Figure 18).
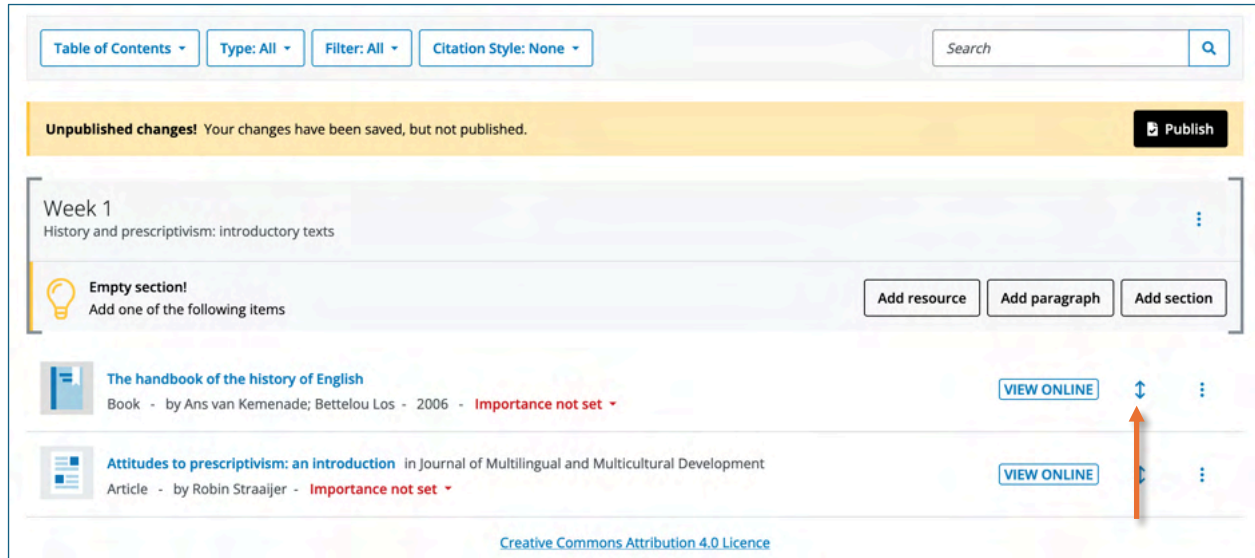
Figure 18 An empty section with items that can be dragged into it

You can create sub-sections in the same way: by either starting a new section within an existing section, or by moving one section into another. All sections and sub-sections will automatically be added to the *Table of Contents* at the top of the reading list (see the example in Figure 19).
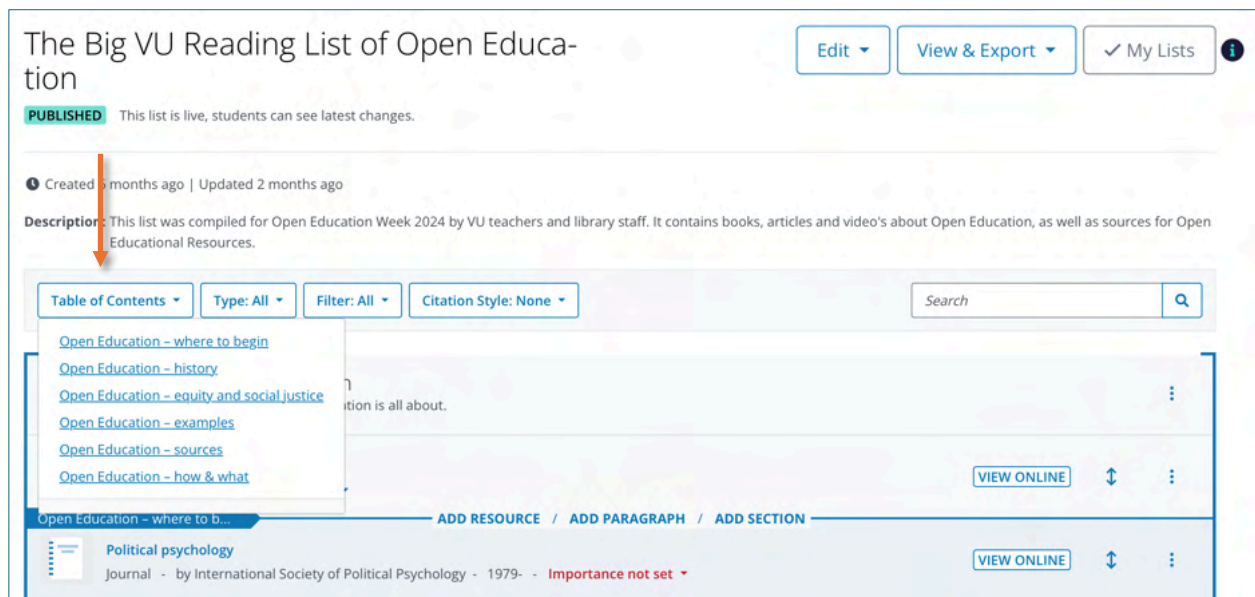
Figure 19 Table of contents of a VU Reading List

Note that most of the options for reading list items and sections described in this section – moving, and adding importances or notes – can also be accessed by clicking via the so-called 'meatballs menu' (the three-dots) to the right of an item or a section.

5   Collaborating & sharing

If you teach a course together with other colleagues, you may want to share your VU Reading Lists or even create lists together. This is possible. Most of the functions discussed in this chapter are available from the menus *Edit* and *View & Export* of the reading list you are working on.

To share your VU Reading Lists with students, we advise that you do so via Canvas. Chapter 8 explains the options for sharing VU Reading Lists via Canvas.

5.1   Who owns a reading list?

Thinking about collaborating and sharing naturally raises the question of who owns a reading list. Formally, where the VU Reading Lists manager is concerned, you are not automatically listed as the owner (*List owner*) of a reading list you created. Your profile shows the lists you own in the tab *Lists owned by me* (see Figure 2).

This setup of the VU Reading Lists manager seems unusual at first, but it allows support staff and others (such as student assistants or University library staff) to create lists for teaching staff who do not have the time or skill to create lists for their courses themselves.

Note that before you can make anyone list owner of a VU Reading List, the prospective list owner needs to have signed into the VU Reading Lists manager at least once in order to make themselves known to the system.

If you are creating lists for other people, you can make them *List owner* by going into the *Edit* menu of that particular reading list and selecting the option *Assign list owner* (Figure 20). The list owner can be yourself, or a colleague at VU. It is also possible to have more than one list owner – which may come in handy when a course has multiple teachers.

Adding list owners does mainly one this: help students to find the list more easily in the VU Reading Lists manager by searching for the names of their teacher(s). This also means that being the owner of a list doesn't automatically mean you can also add new items to that list and publish the list. For that, you have to have the role *List publisher* (see section 5.2). All VU staff are automatically assigned the role *List publisher* upon first logging into the VU Reading Lists manager.
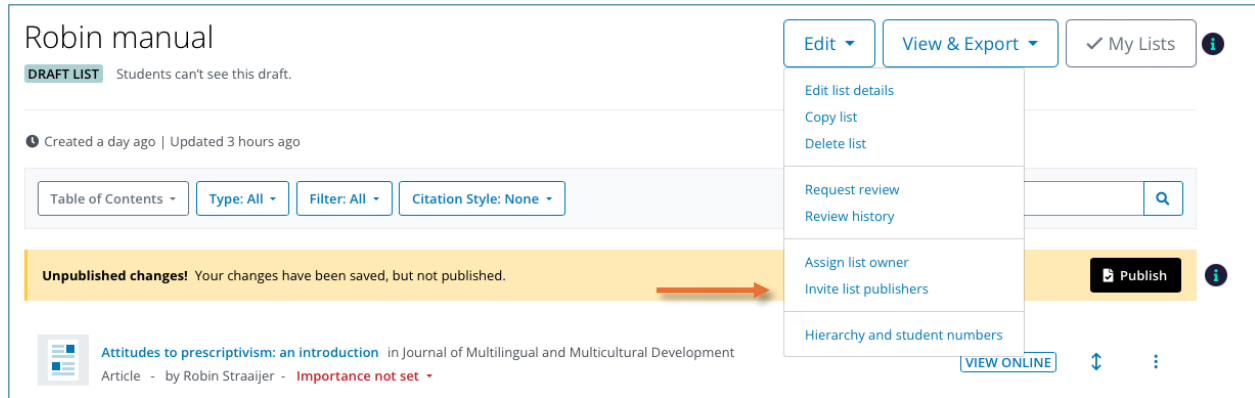
Figure 20 The Edit *menu in a VU Reading List*

When you have assigned someone else as the owner of a list, that list will show up in their *My Lists*-tab of the main menu. If you no longer need to work with the list, you can then safely remove it from your own *My Lists*-tab.

5.2   Co-publishing a VU Reading List

The *Edit* menu of your reading list also offers the option to *invite a list publisher* for a particular list. Just enter your colleagues' email addresses and they'll receive an invitation to become a list publisher for the list. After accepting the invitation, the reading list will show up in their *My Lists*-tab, and they will be able to add items to the list and make other changes.

5.3   Sharing a VU Reading List

You will probably most often present your VU Reading Lists in Canvas. This is explained in Section 8. The following sections show additional ways of sharing reading lists. There are several ways to share a VU Reading List (or its individual items) from within the application. The main difference is whether the people you want to share them with are inside or outside the VU, meaning whether they are able to log in to the VU Reading List manager at vu.rl.talis.com with a VUnetID.

Note that lists must have been published – that is, made available to others – before you can share them, via Canvas or otherwise. Sharing is different from co-publishing a list: when you share a list, you simply point someone else to where the list is.

5.3.1   Sharing with someone inside VU

If you can't or don't want to use Canvas, and you want to share items or entire lists within the university, you can simply send the recipient a link. To send someone within VU a link to an item in your reading list, choose the option *Share item* in the meatballs menu next to the item (see also Figure 19).

If you wish to share an entire VU Reading List with someone at VU, simply copy the URL of the list (remove everything after ".html") and past the link where you wish to share the list. For example, the URL https://rl.talis.com/3/vu/lists/B37C002A-D0E4-7FA7-5AF5-45A0A70716D5.html links to *The Big VU Reading List of Open Education*.

5.3.2   Sharing with someone outside VU

It is also possible to share the content of your VU Reading Lists with people outside VU. However, since they cannot log into the VU Reading Lists manager, they will not be able to benefit from the full functionality of the application, such as adding notes or adding the items to bookmarks.

To share a reading list, use the *View & Export*-menu in the reading list you wish to share (see Figure 21 in Chapter 7). Here you find options to share the list as a RIS-file for use in reference managers, a CSV-file, and two different types of PDFs: as a simple list, or in bibliographic form. You can change the bibliographic output format in the *Citation Style*-menu in the reading list to the right of the *Table of Contents* (see for example Figure 19).

After you select your format, the list will download to your computer, and you can share it.

6 Requesting educational resources

After you have published your list (made visible and available to others) by means of the *Publish* button, the University library will automatically receive a message that there is a new list.

If you wish the library to contact you regarding a particular item, add a *Note for library* to that item in the list. When you have added a *Note for library*, a library staff member from the team *Subject Librarians Information* will review your list and check for messages for the library. Section 4.2.2 explains how to add a *Note for library*. You could add such a note for various reasons, for example:

- To request the purchase of a book, journal or database;
- To order additional copies of a book or the availability of a new edition;
- To ask a question about a book, journal or database.

You will receive a personal notification about your request as soon as possible. You can also contact your faculty's subject librarian directly for questions regarding the collection of the university library.

Your *Note for library* is not visible to students.

7 VU Reading Lists Analytics

The *Analytics* option in the *View & Export*-menu supplies you with additional information about your VU Reading List (Figure 21). Clicking this option takes you to the Analytics dashboard of VU Reading Lists.
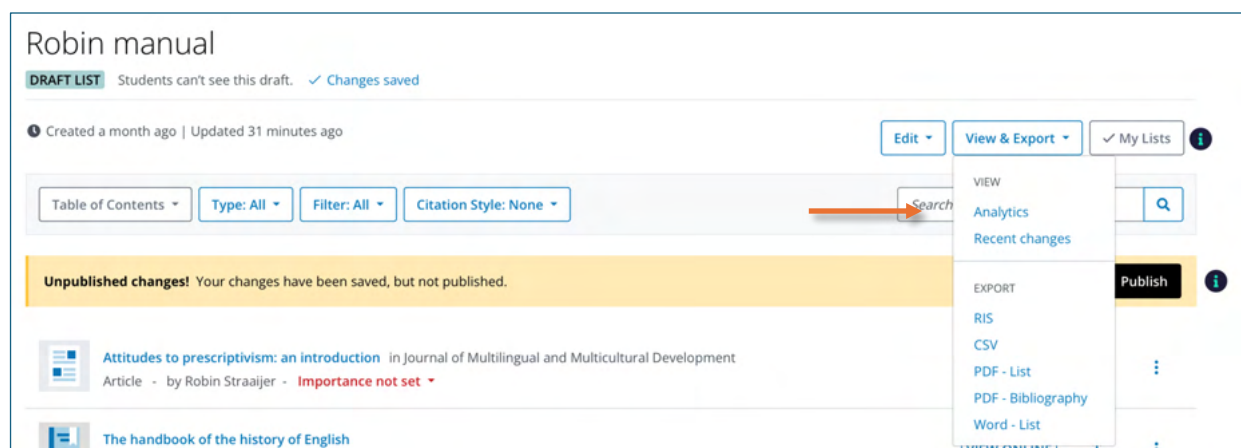

Figure 21 The View & Export menu in the VU Reading Lists manager

The Analytics dashboard shows how popular certain items are, and whether the metadata is OK (Figure 22). Next to each item is a coloured bar that indicates how many times an item has been clicked on. Green indicates that a resource is clicked on frequently, while red means it is visited rarely. In such cases, you can try promoting the item's use by adding a note for students highlighting the benefits of the resource, or by moving it to another place on the list.
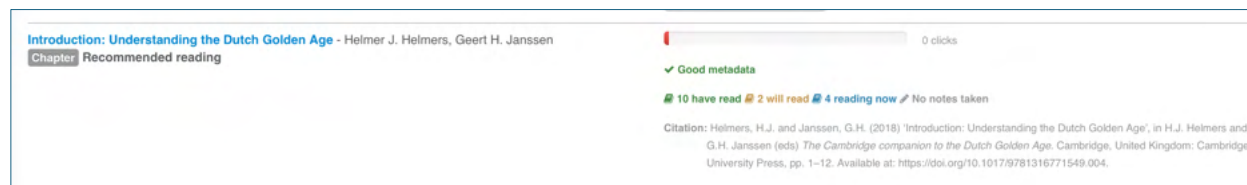

Figure 22 The analytics dashboard in VU Reading Lists

You can also see the reading intentions of students as a group, and how many students have added personal notes to that particular item. For privacy reasons, you are not able to see the names of the students who have posted them or the content of these notes.

8   Using VU Reading Lists in Canvas

8.1   General notes

This chapter deals as much with the Canvas virtual learning environment as it does with VU Reading Lists, and assumes a working knowledge of Canvas. If you're new to Canvas, please first complete the course Getting To Know Canvas - Teachers.

Before you try to add your VU Reading List to Canvas, make sure that the list has been published. Don't forget to also publish any changes you make.

VU Reading Lists are fully integrated with Canvas. This means that although you *do* need to use the VU Reading Lists manager to *create* your reading list, once your list is added to Canvas (see below how to do this), you can make most changes to your list directly in Canvas.

It doesn't matter if you make changes via Canvas or via the VU Reading List manager on vu.rl.talis.com. It is essentially the same environment: changes made in the VU Reading Lists manager immediately show up in Canvas and vice versa.

8.2   Adding a VU Reading List to Canvas

You can add a VU Reading List to Canvas in 3 ways:

1.   Via the navigation menu,
2.   In a Canvas *Module*, or
3.   On a Canvas *Page*.

8.2.1   The navigation menu

VU Reading Lists appears by default in the navigation menu on the left-hand side of each Canvas course (Figure 23). You can use the *VU Reading Lists* option in the navigation menu to link your published list. You can find published lists using the search bar that appears after you click on *VU Reading Lists* in the navigation menu. Select the list and click *Embed List*. The application may ask you to log into VU Reading Lists manager (Talis Aspire) again before you can add your list.
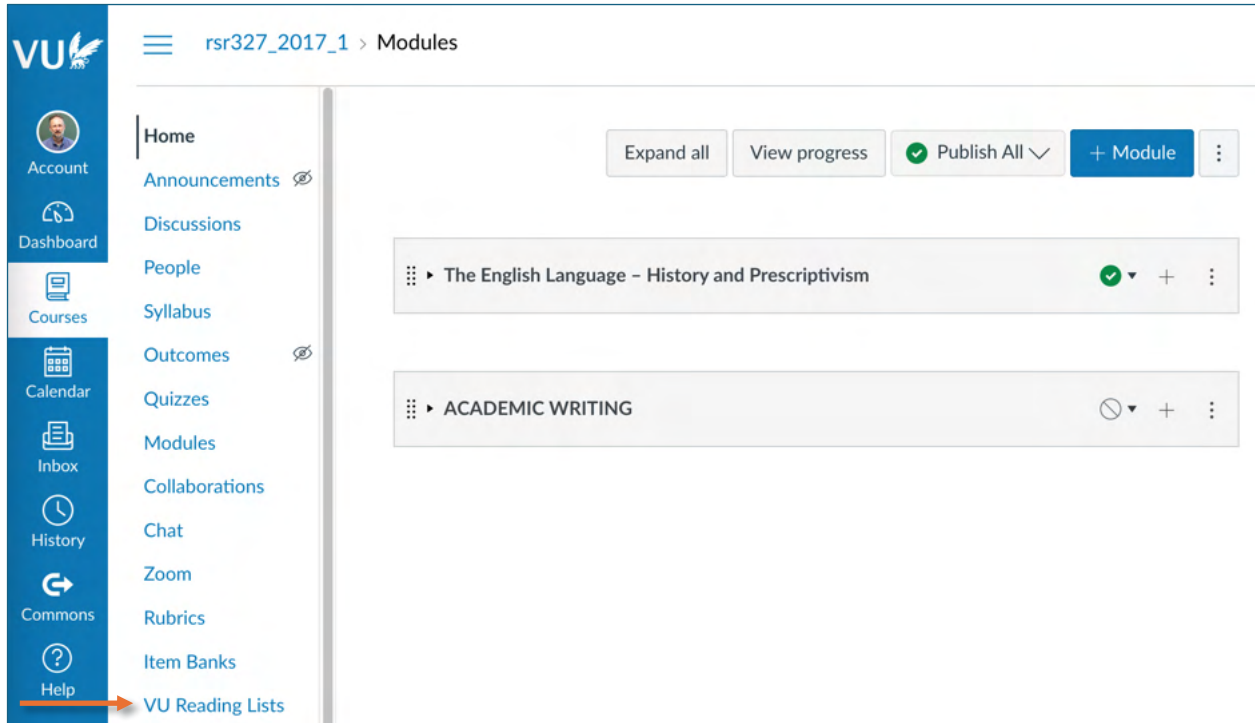
Figure 23 VU Reading Lists in the navigation menu of a Canvas course

Your list is now fully embedded in the Canvas course. If you wish to change to a different list, just follow the same steps (note that the button first called *Embed List* now shows up as *Embed a different list* – the process, however, remains the same).

8.2.2   VU Reading Lists in a Canvas *Module*

In Modules, you can share a section of your VU Reading List or the entire list. To do this, click on *Modules* in your Canvas course and choose the module you want to add your VU Reading List (or section) to. Press the plus sign and choose VU Reading Lists from the list of *External tool*-menu (Figure 24).
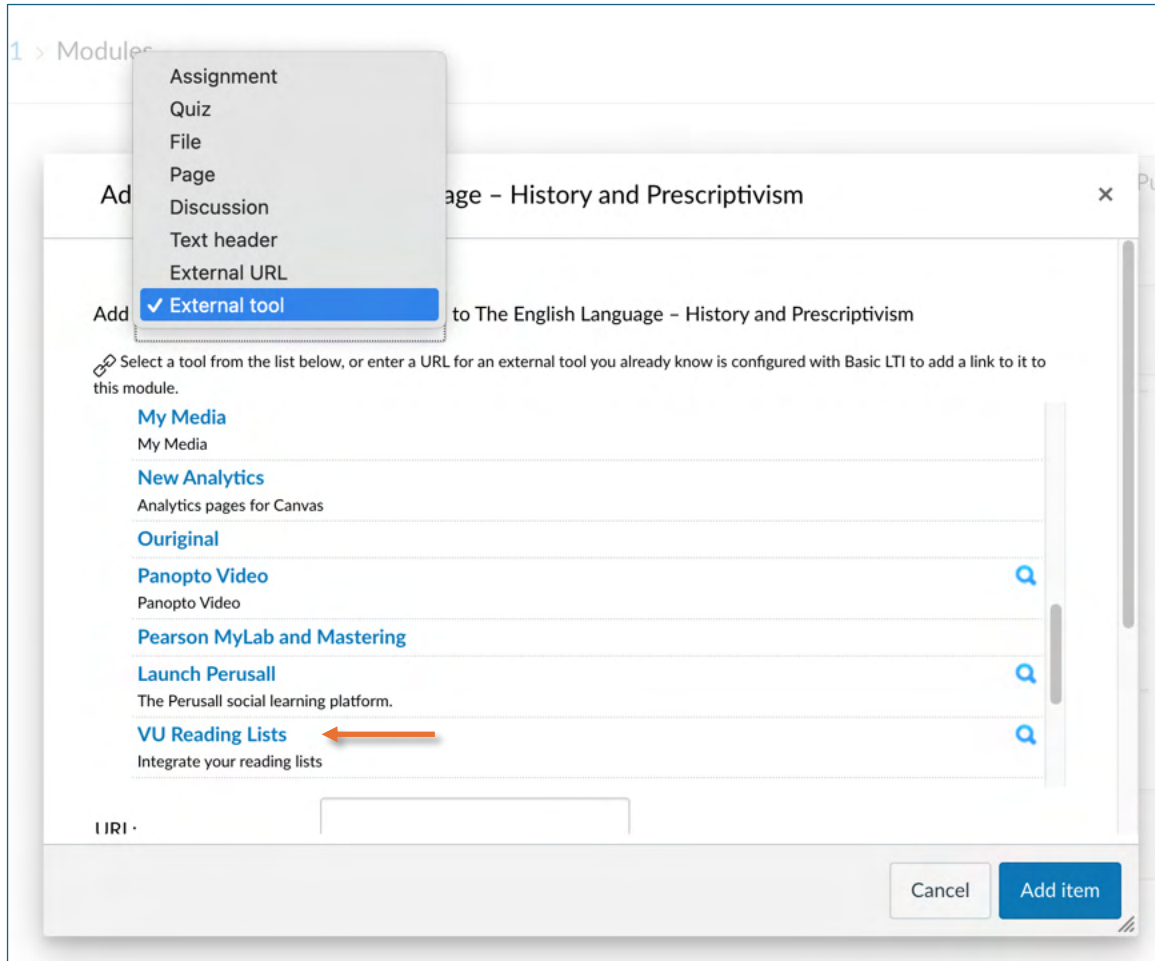
Figure 24 VU Reading Lists in a Canvas Modules' External tool *menu*

Search for the VU Reading List that you wish to add to the Module. Based on your ownership of lists, the tool will already suggest lists that you may want to add (Figure 25).
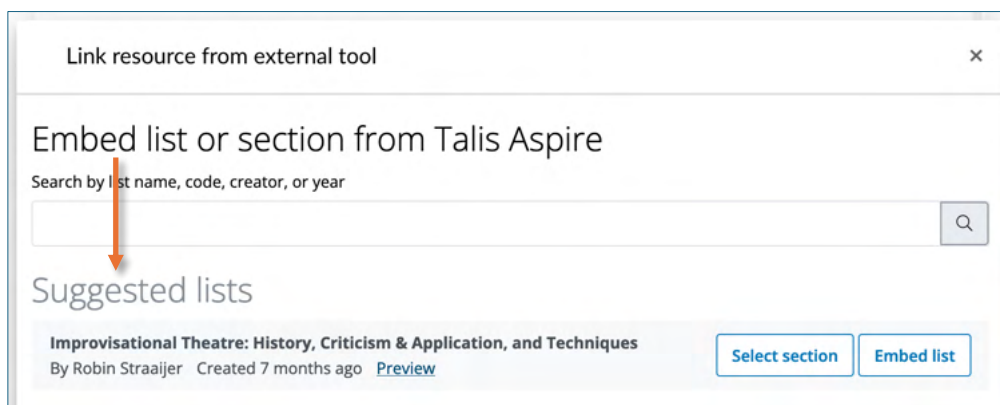

Figure 25 Reading list search menu in Canvas

You can choose whether you want to add the entire list by selecting *Embed list,* or only part of the list by selecting *Select section*. If you choose *Select section*, a new window pops up allowing you to select a section or sub-section of the reading list that you wish to add (see Figure 26). Note that the application may ask you to log in again in order to add your list.
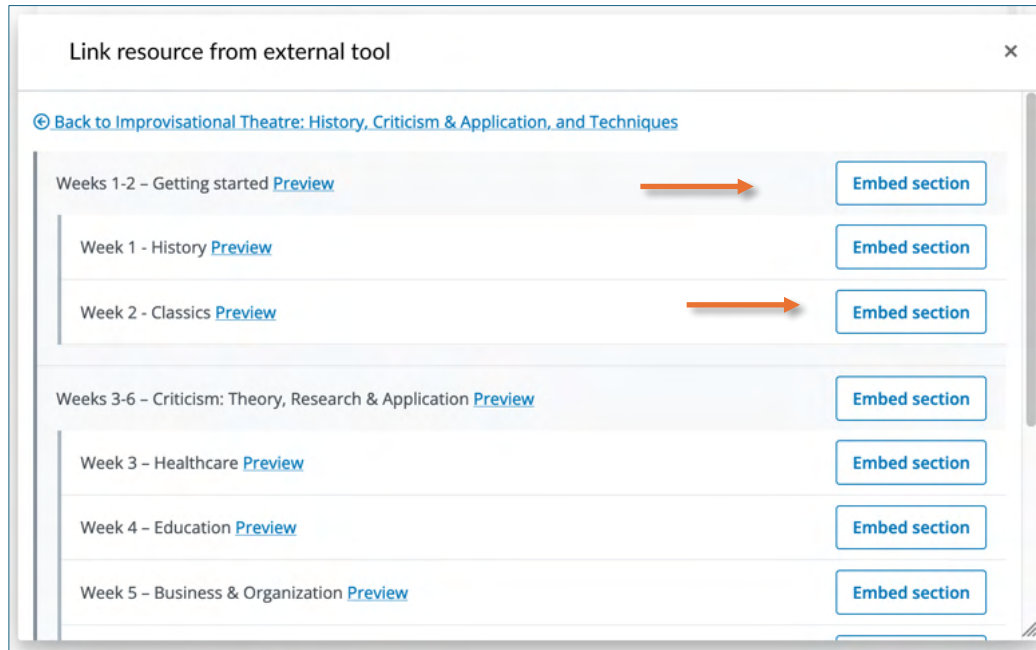

Figure 26 Embed options for VU Reading Lists in Canvas

The desired the VU Reading List or section (or sub-section) will appear as an embed in the Module. This embedding means that you can also make alterations to the list or section (or sub-section) directly in Canvas.

8.2.3   VU Reading Lists on a Canvas *Page*

You can link to your VU Reading List in a Canvas Page. To do this, go into the *Edit* menu of the Page, click the plug icon in the menu of the Page's content editor and find VU Reading Lists (Figure 27).

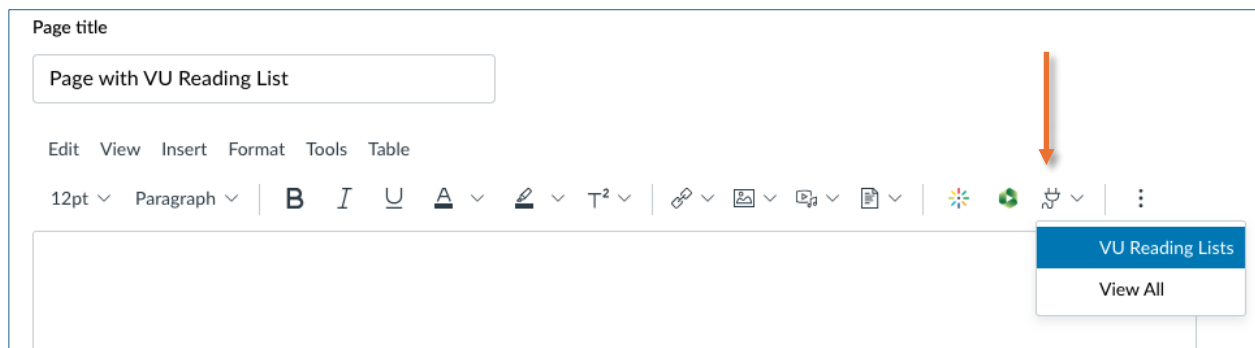*Figure 27 VU Reading Lists in the Canvas Page's content editor*

Just as with adding a VU Reading List to a Module, you can choose whether you want to add the entire list or only part of the list by selecting the section or sub-section you wish to add.

The desired reading list or section (or sub-section) will now appear on the Page as a link to the list in VU Reading Lists manager, where students can access the list.

9 Questions & Answers

Below are some questions that may have come up after reading this manual. For general help with using VU Reading Lists, contact the Steunpunt Leermaterial en Auteursrecht.

Question	Answer
How do I start with VU Reading Lists?	Go to vu.rl.talis.com and log in with your VUnetID.
How do I install the bookmarking tool?	See the instructions and links on the Talis Aspire help page for this.
Can I add video's to my reading list?	Yes. With the bookmarking extension you can add almost all digital web sources to your list, including pages with video's. It is not possible to directly add video files, these will need to be uploaded somewhere, such as Panopto or Canvas.
Can I put my own materials or video's on Canvas on a VU Reading List?*	Yes, that is possible. Use the bookmarking extension to add the source from Canvas to your reading list. You can add videos you have made by linking to their location in *Panopto*, the university's video platform.
What do I do if a source on my list is not available in the University Library?	You can still add this source to your reading list. If it is exam literature, make sure to add a *Note for library* with a purchase request, or contact the University Library.

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* If you have created more extensive materials, the University Library can help you to find a more durable solution, or with creating an open educational resource.

Can I copy a VU Reading List?	Yes, you can. Go to the list, then click *Edit > Copy list*. Alternatively, in your *My Lists*-menu, click on the meatballs menu of the list you wish to copy and select *Copy to a new list*.
Can I import references from EndNote or another reference manager?	Yes, this is possible. On how to do this, see section 4.2.4 or How to import a reading list as a RIS-file.
Can teachers see what notes students have made in VU Reading List?	No. For privacy reasons, teachers cannot see the content of the notes that students have made.
Can I use a different citation style that is not among the options given?	Contact the University Library to explore what is possible.

10   Useful links

Below you find a number of useful links for VU Reading Lists and related VU services for teachers and support staff.

At the University Library (video 1:56 min.)

VU Reading Lists login page (*Talis Aspire*)

VU Reading Lists on Canvas *VU Tools for Education*

Create reading lists with VU Reading Lists (on vu.nl)

VU Reading List guide for lecturers (video manual 7:25 min.)

Lean Library (browser tool)

VU Centre for Teaching and Learning

VU Education Lab

VU TechLab (only in Dutch)

Extended Reality (XR) as an educational tool

3D-printing for educational purposes

Object-based Teaching & Learning (OBTL)

Easy Access-regeling (infographic)

Open Educational Resources: a support landscape (animation 3:10 min.)

edusources (using, creating & sharing open educational resources)

University Library on ServiceNow