LEARNING LETTERS

2025
Volume 5
Article 64
https://doi.org/10.20851/ll.v5.64

Learning that resonates: The Discourse Force Framework for holistic evaluation

Trixie James[1] and Breanna Knight[1]

1. CQUniversity, Australia

Educational multimedia is widely used to deliver engaging learning experiences across diverse student cohorts. Despite its popularity, existing evaluation frameworks often focus narrowly on design or usability, overlooking the broader learner experience. This article introduces the Discourse Force Framework, a multidimensional, learner-centred model for evaluating educational multimedia. Developed through a literature-based inquiry guided by grounded theory principles, the framework adapts the concept of Discourse Force to the educational context. Rather than generating domains from empirical data, grounded theory was used systematically to review literature, identify gaps, and assess the relevance of prior conceptual work. The framework comprises four interconnected domains, Discourse Purpose, Cognitive Structure, Emotional Resonance, and Behaviour Impact, which offer a holistic lens for understanding how multimedia supports meaning-making, emotional engagement, and behavioural change. This inquiry confirms the need for a model that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioural perspectives. To illustrate its practical application, the framework was used to evaluate an educational video based on the Hero's Journey narrative, demonstrating how each domain reveals distinct yet interrelated aspects of the learner experience. By focusing on learners' understanding and outcomes, the Discourse Force Framework encourages reflective practice and supports the development of educational multimedia that is not only informative but also transformative.

Keywords: affective engagement, behavioural engagement, discourse force framework, educational multimedia, learner-centred evaluation, transformative learning

Corresponding author: Trixie James, t.james@cqu.edu.au

Recommended citation: James, T., & Knight, B. (2025). Learning that resonates: The Discourse Force Framework for holistic evaluation. *Learning Letters*, *5,* Article 64. https://doi.org/10.20851/ll.v5.64

Introduction

Educational multimedia has become a dominant mode of knowledge delivery, blending entertainment and instruction to engage diverse learners. In post-COVID-19 education, reliance on multimodal tools has accelerated, with educators increasingly turning to videos, animations, simulations, and interactive platforms to enhance understanding, motivation, and collaboration (Abdulrahaman et al., 2020; James et al., 2022). These resources can meet varied cognitive and emotional needs, offering dynamic learning opportunities that go beyond static, text-based materials (Mayer & Fiorella, 2021). While existing models have significantly advanced the design and delivery of educational multimedia, they offer limited insight into the retrospective, learner-centred evaluation of how multimedia is experienced and interpreted. Existing approaches often focus on functional design, content accuracy, and usability (Hadjerrouit, 2010; Leacock & Nesbit, 2007), treating multimedia as a technological product rather than a learner experience. Two major theoretical traditions, critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Gee, 1990, 1991; van Dijk, 1997) and multimodal discourse theory (Berger, 2016), have contributed valuable insights into power structures and authorial intent. However, these

frameworks primarily address how meaning is constructed by designers and institutions, rather than how it is received and interpreted by learners. As such, they illuminate important aspects of discourse but do not focus on resolving the challenge of learner-centred evaluation. Cognitive models, such as Mayer's (2022, 2024) cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML) and its later affective extensions have improved design principles, but are rarely used for retrospective, user-centred evaluation. These models guide how multimedia should be constructed to support cognitive processing, rather than how learners experience and respond to it after use. Tools such as the Learning Object Review Instrument (LORI) (Leacock & Nesbit, 2007) provide structured checklists that assess technical quality, usability, and instructional design. However, such tools reflect a product-oriented perspective, focusing on whether multimedia meets predefined standards rather than exploring how learners interpret, engage with, and find meaning in the content. They neglect deeper emotional and behavioural dimensions of engagement, which are central to understanding whether multimedia achieves its intended educational impact from the learner's perspective.

Our work responds to this gap by seeking frameworks that capture the learner's experience more holistically. This led us to develop the Discourse Force Framework, a multidimensional model designed to evaluate multimedia from the learner's perspective. A colleague directed us to a historic paper by Brewer and Lichtenstein (1982) who presented the notion of Discourse Force. Although not written with educational multimedia in mind, we recognised that their conceptualisation of discourse offered a promising foundation for a broader evaluative model. Through a grounded theory approach when reviewing educational multimedia literature, we compared existing evaluative approaches with Brewer and Lichtenstein's (1982) findings. This comparison revealed both the limitations of current models and the potential of developing Discourse Force into a multidimensional framework. Although originally developed in the context of story theory, the conceptual breadth of Discourse Force and its underutilisation in educational contexts made it a compelling foundation for our work.

Building on this insight, we developed the Discourse Force Framework to evaluate multimedia resources from the learner's perspective. The framework integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioural considerations across four domains: Discourse Purpose, Cognitive Structure, Emotional Resonance, and Behavioural Impact, providing a reflective tool for educators to examine how multimedia not only delivers knowledge but also shapes meaning-making, emotional connection, and behavioural change. Having trialled the model in our own work and shared it with colleagues, we have already observed its practical value in guiding the design, selection, and evaluation of multimedia resources.

Research aim

The aim of this article is to introduce and articulate the Discourse Force Framework, a multidimensional, literature-derived model for evaluating educational multimedia from a holistic learner-centred perspective. In doing so, we seek to address the limitations of existing evaluative tools by offering an approach that foregrounds cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of learner engagement.

Methods

Grounded theory principles (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were employed to guide the iterative literature review and framework development. This approach was not used to generate theory from raw data, but rather to systematically interrogate existing literature and identify conceptual gaps relevant to multimedia evaluation. Searches were conducted across Scopus and ERIC through the CQUniversity Library search engine and Google Scholar using

terms such as “educational multimedia evaluation”, “cognitive-affective learning”, and “technology evaluation”. The review encompassed literature published over the past 20 years, with selective inclusion of seminal works foundational to discourse and multimedia theory. Inclusion criteria prioritised conceptual models, theoretical analyses and empirical studies that addressed cognitive, emotional, or behavioural engagement. Of approximately 40 initially identified sources, 23 were retained following full-text review. This iterative process of theoretical sampling and constant comparison enabled the identification and validation of the four domains of the Discourse Force Framework, ensuring both theoretical grounding and contextual relevance.

Results

Introducing the framework

The outcomes of our literature-based inquiry affirmed the need for a multidimensional, learner-centred model that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioural perspectives. Building on Brewer and Lichtenstein’s (1982) original notion of Discourse Force and adapting it for contemporary educational contexts, we constructed the Discourse Force Framework. This framework comprises four interrelated domains which include Discourse Purpose, Cognitive Structure, Emotional Resonance, and Behaviour Impact. Each domain offers a distinct evaluative lens through which educational multimedia can be examined (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Discourse Force Framework

Together, these domains capture not only whether multimedia aligns with its intended pedagogical aims but also how learners interpret, connect with, and act upon the material. Educators can use the framework to evaluate whether multimedia fosters emotional engagement and encourages behavioural change, such as applying new skills in real-world contexts. It also supports the intentional design of multimedia from the outset, ensuring

alignment with learning goals. Depending on the material, all domain aspects may be addressed or selectively prioritised.

In the following sections, each domain is presented in detail, demonstrating how it addresses gaps in existing evaluation models and contributes to a holistic understanding of multimedia's educational value.

Domain 1: Discourse Purpose

A recurring gap in the literature is the absence of evaluative focus on whether multimedia achieves its intended educational objectives from the learner's perspective. Existing tools frequently measure clarity, usability, or instructional quality (Hadjerrouit, 2010; Leacock & Nesbit, 2007) without systematically examining alignment between design intent and learner experience. Research on edutainment (Hussain et al., 2019) and cognitive–affective learning (Abdulrahaman et al., 2020) emphasises that intent is only realised when resources motivate, inform, and inspire learners in ways that meet pedagogical goals. However, this is rarely measured directly and requires post evaluation involving learner interaction and feedback.

The Discourse Purpose domain addresses this gap by positioning the learner's interpretations and perceived relevance as central to evaluating success. Rather than assuming that design objectives automatically translate into impact, this domain foregrounds how learners experience and articulate the purpose of multimedia resources. The key question for this domain is *How effective is the discourse in achieving its intended objectives?*

Domain 2: Cognitive Structure

Cognitive engagement is addressed unevenly across existing models. While Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML) (Mayer, 2022, 2024) offers valuable design principles, such as reducing cognitive overload and coordinating visual and auditory input, its focus remains on resource construction rather than learner interpretation after use. Similarly, schema-building strategies, such as narrative flow and thematic coherence (Clark & Mayer, 2016b, 2016a), are well-documented, but rarely evaluated from the learner's perspective once multimedia is implemented.

The Cognitive Structure domain directly responds to this gap. It shifts the evaluative lens from design features to learner experience, examining how multimedia supports mental organisation, connects new and prior knowledge, and fosters deeper meaning-making. Unlike existing models, this domain prioritises retrospective insight into how learners cognitively engage with discourse—not just how content is delivered. The key question guiding this domain is: *How does the user interpret, understand and derive meaning from the discourse elements?*

Domain 3: Emotional Resonance

Although affective engagement is increasingly recognised in multimedia research (Liu et al., 2024; Mayer, 2024; Schneider et al., 2022), it remains peripheral in most evaluation frameworks, often treated as an incidental benefit rather than a driver of learning. Yet research in emotional design and social presence shows that emotionally engaging content can improve retention, deepen motivation, and create a sense of belonging (Atkinson et al., 2005; Lawson et al., 2021).

The Emotional Resonance domain makes emotional impact an explicit evaluative dimension. It enables educators to assess whether multimedia evokes empathy, curiosity, interest, or positive affect in ways that enhance learning. By reframing emotion from a secondary outcome to a central factor, this domain highlights the role of affective engagement in sustaining attention, motivation, and long-term learner connection. This domain poses the question; *How*

does the discourse engage learners emotionally to foster a personal connection?

Domain 4: Behaviour Impact

Perhaps the most significant gap in the literature is the near-total absence of behaviour measures in multimedia evaluation. Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2018) and the Review, Connect, Extend, Apply framework (Griffin & James, 2024; James, 2015) highlight the importance of translating new understanding into action, yet few multimedia frameworks assess whether learners apply acquired knowledge or skills in authentic contexts. Studies on procedural knowledge transfer (Zakrajsek, 2024) show that behavioural change can be subtle but critical to long-term learning outcomes.

The Behaviour Impact domain incorporates this perspective, evaluating whether multimedia fosters shifts in attitudes, motivation, and behaviours both within and beyond the learning environment. The key question it poses is *How does the discourse influence behaviours, attitudes and motivations?*

Case study

To illustrate the practical application of the Discourse Force Framework, the authors evaluated an existing educational video that presented the story of an academic's undergraduate journey from a non-academic background through the gaining of her degree using the Hero's Journey paradigm (Vogler, 2007). This video is available for students who are enrolled in an enabling program at an Australian university. Enabling programs are pre-university courses designed to prepare students, often from underrepresented or non-traditional backgrounds, for higher education by developing their academic skills, confidence, and familiarity with university culture (James, 2024; Willans & Seary, 2007, 2009). However, many students enter with low self-confidence and limited cultural capital, meaning they need to develop not only academic skills but also emotional resilience and a sense of belonging to succeed in undergraduate study (Willans & Seary, 2007, 2009). This 7.5 minute video, created in 2017, was designed to inspire students in the core academic skills unit, Preparation Skills for University (SKIL40025), by showing that others have successfully completed the same academic journey. Students in this unit were encouraged to view this video in their second week of study and add a reflective response in the unit's forum. Although the forum posts were not a compulsory activity, the stories students shared indicated that the video had made a meaningful impression. This provided the authors with an opportunity to evaluate the video's impact. Ethical clearance was subsequently obtained to analyse student reflections posted between Term 1 2018 and Term 1 2023. Of 7,987 enrolled students, 412 (about 5%) voluntarily contributed to the Hero's Journey forum, offering valuable insights into student engagement with this optional multimedia resource. Using a deductive approach guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, the four domains of the framework: Discourse Purpose, Cognitive Structure, Emotional Resonance, and Behaviour Impact, were coded separately. Student comments were mapped to each domain's guiding question, and themes were then established within each domain (see Appendix).

Discussion of findings

Applying the Discourse Force Framework to the *Hero's Journey* video illustrates its utility in capturing multifaceted learner experiences. Each domain revealed distinct yet interconnected aspects of learning through identifying if it achieved it purpose as an educational tool, alongside the cognitive integration, emotional engagement, and behaviour intent experienced by the learners.

However, applying the framework also revealed some challenges. Coding student reflections

by domains occasionally proved difficult, particularly when responses overlapped cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. This overlap suggests that while the domains are conceptually distinct, learner experience is often fluid and multidimensional. Additionally, some domains, such as Emotional Resonance, yielded richer insights than others, highlighting the variability in how learners engage with different aspects of multimedia.

The framework facilitates systematic reflection, helping educators identify both strengths and areas for enhancement. Its learner-centred orientation complements existing models like CTML and LORI by shifting the focus from design and usability to interpretation and impact. Unlike CTML, which emphasises cognitive load during design, or LORI, which provides checklist-based evaluation, the Discourse Force Framework foregrounds learner agency and meaning-making. It also extends the analytical scope of CDA by incorporating affective and behavioural dimensions, offering a more holistic view of how discourse functions in educational multimedia.

Importantly, the richness of the student data demonstrated that evaluative approaches grounded in learner experience can reveal how emotional responses shape learning and how behavioural changes contribute to learning outcomes. This underscores the value of examining multimedia not merely as instructional material, but as an influence on meaning-making and learner agency.

Conclusion

The Discourse Force Framework offers a multidimensional, learner-centred approach to evaluating educational multimedia, addressing limitations in existing models that often prioritise content accuracy, usability, or design over the holistic learner experience. Application of the framework to the *Hero's Journey* video demonstrates its capacity to capture cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of engagement, providing educators with a structured tool to reflect on both intended and emergent outcomes of multimedia resources. Importantly, the framework facilitates both retrospective and prospective evaluation. Educators can apply the framework retrospectively to assess existing resources or prospectively to inform future development, ensuring alignment with pedagogical goals and learner needs. By foregrounding learner interpretations and outcomes, the Discourse Force Framework encourages reflective practice and supports the creation of multimedia that is not only instructive but transformative.

Future research could explore the framework's adaptability across different multimedia genres, such as simulations, podcasts, or interactive games, to test its versatility. Additionally, applying the framework with larger or more diverse learner cohorts would help validate its generalisability and reveal context-specific insights. Developing practitioner-friendly rubrics or digital tools based on the framework could further support its integration into everyday educational practice, making learner-centred evaluation more accessible and scalable.

Funding

No funding was received for the conduct of this research.

Disclosure of conflicts of interest

The authors report no potential conflict of interest.

Disclosure of the use of AI-assisted technologies during writing

The authors used ChatGPT for the purpose of final editing to ensure clarity of expression and consistency in terminology and flow. The overall development of the idea and review of the

literature was completed entirely by the authors, and we take full responsibility for the content.

About the authors

Dr Trixie James is a lecturer in the School of Access Education at CQUniversity. Trixie's research interests centre on the support and engagement of under-represented students in the higher education sector, specifically those entering enabling programs. Trixie's research encompasses social innovation, positive psychology, generative artificial intelligence and teacher student identity. She heads a social innovation working party and is an executive member of the National Association of Enabling Education of Australia (NAEEA). Trixie is highly active in research and is a member of the Centre for Research in Equity and Advancement of Teaching and Education (CREATE). Trixie has presented her findings at conferences across Australia and internationally, including the Netherlands, United Kingdom and New Zealand, and has been the recipient of Tier 1, Tier 2 teaching awards and the National Tier 3 award for outstanding contributions to student learning plus a Dean's Award for Outstanding Research as an Early Career Researcher.

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9591-2480

Breanna Knight is an associate lecturer at CQUniversity in the School of Access Education. Within the Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) course, Breanna is a unit coordinator of SKIL40025 Preparation Skills for University and teaches within this unit, and LNGE40049 Essay Writing for University. Breanna is also an Academic Learning Advisor with the Academic Learning Centre. Breanna completed the Master of Applied Linguistics in 2022 at the University of New England. She is committed to continuing her knowledge of teaching practices in adult education and is interested in the scholarship of learning and teaching within enabling education.

https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5630-1114

References

Abdulrahaman, M. D., Faruk, N., Oloyede, A. A., Surajudeen-Bakinde, N. T., Olawoyin, L. A., Mejabi, O. V., Imam-Fulani, Y. O., Fahm, A. O., & Azeez, A. L. (2020). Multimedia tools in the teaching and learning processes: A systematic review. *Heliyon*, *6*(11), e05312. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05312

Atkinson, R. K., Mayer, R. E., & Merrill, M. M. (2005). Fostering social agency in multimedia learning: Examining the impact of an animated agent's voice. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *30*(1), 117–139. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2004.07.001

Berger, A. A. (2016). A discourse on discourse studies. *Society*, *53*(6), 597–602. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-016-0071-z

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.cqu.edu.au/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brewer, W. F., & Lichtenstein, E. H. (1982). Stories are to entertain: A structural-affect theory of stories. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *6*(5–6), 473–486. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(82)90021-2

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. SAGE Publications.

Clark, R. C., & Mayer, R. E. (Eds.). (2016a). Applying the personalization and embodiment principles: Use conversational style, polite wording, human voice, and virtual coaches. In R. C. Clark & R. E. Mayer (Eds.), *E-Learning and the science of instruction* (1st ed., pp. 179–200). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119239086.ch9

Clark, R. C., & Mayer, R. E. (Eds.). (2016b). Engagement in e-Learning. In R. C. Clark & R. E. Mayer

(Eds.), *E-Learning and the science of instruction* (1st ed., pp. 219–238). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119239086.ch11

Gee, J. P. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Falmer Press.

Gee, J. P. (1991). A linguistic approach to narrative. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, *1*(1), 15–39. https://doi.org/10.1075/jnlh.1.1.03ali

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine.

Griffin, H., & James, T. (2024). The temptation of the silver platter: The impact of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) and exemplars on students' capacity to self-regulate. *[Manuscript submitted for publication]*.

Hadjerrouit, S. (2010). A conceptual framework for using and evaluating web-based learning resources in school education. *Journal of Information Technology Education*, *9*. https://www.jite.org/documents/Vol9/JITEv9p053-079Hadjerrouit743.pdf

Hussain, S., Ali, M., & Amin, S. (2019). Use of multimedia technology in education and entertainment. *Advances in Computer Science and Information Technology*, *6*(2), 82–85.

James, D. T. (2024). *Is university for me? Bridging the gap: Equity students journey to university through an enabling program* [Doctoral Dissertation]. University of Tasmania.

James, T. (2015). *Reflective journal*. Higher Expectation Framework. http://www.higherexpectationframework.com/reflective-journal.html

James, T., Bond, K., Kumar, B., Tomlins, M., & Toth, G. (2022). We were all learning and doing our best: Investigating how Enabling educators promoted student belonging in a time of significant complexity and unpredictability. *Journal of University Learning and Teaching*, *19*(4), 1–18.

Lawson, A. P., Mayer, R. E., Adamo-Villani, N., Benes, B., Lei, X., & Cheng, J. (2021). The positivity principle: Do positive instructors improve learning from video lectures? *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *69*(6), 3101–3129. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-021-10057-w

Leacock, T. L., & Nesbit, J. C. (2007). Framework for evaluating the quality of multimedia learning resources. *Educational Technology and Society*, *10*(2), 44–59.

Liu, Y., Ma, S., & Chen, Y. (2024). The impacts of learning motivation, emotional engagement and psychological capital on academic performance in a blended learning university course. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *15*, 1357936. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1357936

Mayer, R. E. (2022). Cognitive theory of multimedia learning. In R. E. Mayer & L. Fiorella (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of multimedia learning* (3rd ed., pp. 57–72). Cambridge University Press.

Mayer, R. E. (2024). The past, present, and future of the cognitive theory of multimedia learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, *36*(1), 8. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09842-1

Mayer, R. E., & Fiorella, L. (Eds.). (2021). *The Cambridge handbook of multimedia learning* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Mezirow, J. (2018). Transformative learning theory. In K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary theories of learning: Learning theorists ... In their own words* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Schneider, S., Beege, M., Nebel, S., Schnaubert, L., & Rey, G. D. (2022). The cognitive-affective-social theory of learning in digital environments (CASTLE). *Educational Psychology Review*, *34*(1), 1–38. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-021-09626-5

van Dijk, T. (1997). *Discourse as structure and process. Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (Vol. 1). SAGE.

Vogler, C. (2007). *The writer's journey: Mythic structure for writers* (3rd ed.). Michael Wiese Productions.

Willans, J., & Seary, K. (2007). 'I'm not stupid after all' – Changing perceptions of self as a tool for transformation. *Proceedings of the National Access and Enabling Educators Australia Conference*. Enabling Education, Newcastle, Australia.

Willans, J., & Seary, K. (2009). 'I feel like I'm being hit from all directions': Enduring the bombardment as a mature age learner returning to formal learning. *Proceedings of the 3rd National Conference of Enabling Educators*. Enabling Education, Toowoomba, Australia.

Zakrajsek, T. D. (2024). *Essentials of the new science of learning: The power of learning in harmony with your brain.* Taylor & Francis Group.

Appendix

Domain 1: Discourse Purpose

How effective is the discourse in achieving its intended objectives?

Main themes	Subthemes/key insights
Inspiration:	Connectedness, aspiration, emotion
Motivation:	Self-empowerment, achieving goals, reframing attitudes

Illustrative findings

Students described feeling a sense of connection to the experiences portrayed in the video. The personal story provided a role models lived experience which helped to build the students aspirations for the higher degree pathway.

Many participants indicated that the video encouraged them to take ownership of their learning, set achievable targets, and shift perspectives on their potential to succeed in higher education. Emotional engagement was central, with learners reporting feelings of hope, determination, and belonging.

These findings illustrate that this Hero's Journey educational multimedia successfully conveyed its intended purpose through inspiring and motivating learners.

Domain 2: Cognitive Structure

How does the user interpret, understand and derive meaning from the discourse elements?

Main themes	Subthemes/key insights
Separation:	Recognising challenges of leaving familiar contexts
Initiation:	Engaging with transformation and adaptation strategies
Return:	Connecting narrative to personal growth and future actions

Illustrative findings

Students' comments indicated that each act prompted reflection on different aspects of their learning journey:

Separation: Students recognised the challenges of leaving familiar contexts and stepping into higher education, reflecting on uncertainties and initial anxieties.

Initiation: Participants engaged cognitively with the process of transformation, identifying strategies for learning and adaptation while navigating obstacles.

Return: Students connected the narrative to their own potential for achievement and growth, consolidating understanding and planning future actions.

This analysis demonstrates that the Hero's Journey narrative structure presented in the educational multimedia supports schema-building and cognitive integration, helping learners make meaning from their experiences in a structured, memorable way.

Domain 3: Emotional Resonance

How does the discourse engage learners emotionally to foster a personal connection?

Main themes	Subthemes/key insights
Self-transcendent motivation:	Experiencing motivation that extended beyond themselves, imagining the broader impact of their educational journey
Vicarious emotional response:	Feeling emotionally aligned with the characters in the video
Affective empathy:	Demonstrating empathy through understanding the struggles and successes portrayed
Appreciative empathy:	Appreciating lessons and insights in ways that informed personal reflection

Illustrative findings

These findings emphasise the importance of evaluating emotional engagement, which can deepen learning and foster personal connection to educational content.

The thematic analysis of student reflections revealed that the Hero's Journey video evoked multiple layers of emotional engagement. Students described being motivated beyond themselves (self-transcendent motivation), feeling aligned with the characters (vicarious response), and empathising with their struggles and successes (affective empathy). They also expressed appreciative empathy, connecting the lessons of the narrative to their own personal growth and reflection.

Domain 4: Behaviour Impact

How does the discourse influence behaviours, attitudes and motivations?

Main themes	Subthemes/key insights
Adaptive strategies:	Students described developing coping and persistence skills to enhance resilience
Embracing growth:	Participants engaged in explorative learning, demonstrating openness to new experiences and challenges
Cultivating effective practices:	Students reported applying strategies and habits conducive to academic success

Illustrative findings

The analysis showed that the Hero's Journey video encouraged students to translate insights into practical actions. They reported developing adaptive strategies to cope with challenges, while also embracing growth through openness to exploration and new experiences. In addition, many described cultivating effective practices, applying strategies and habits to support their academic success.