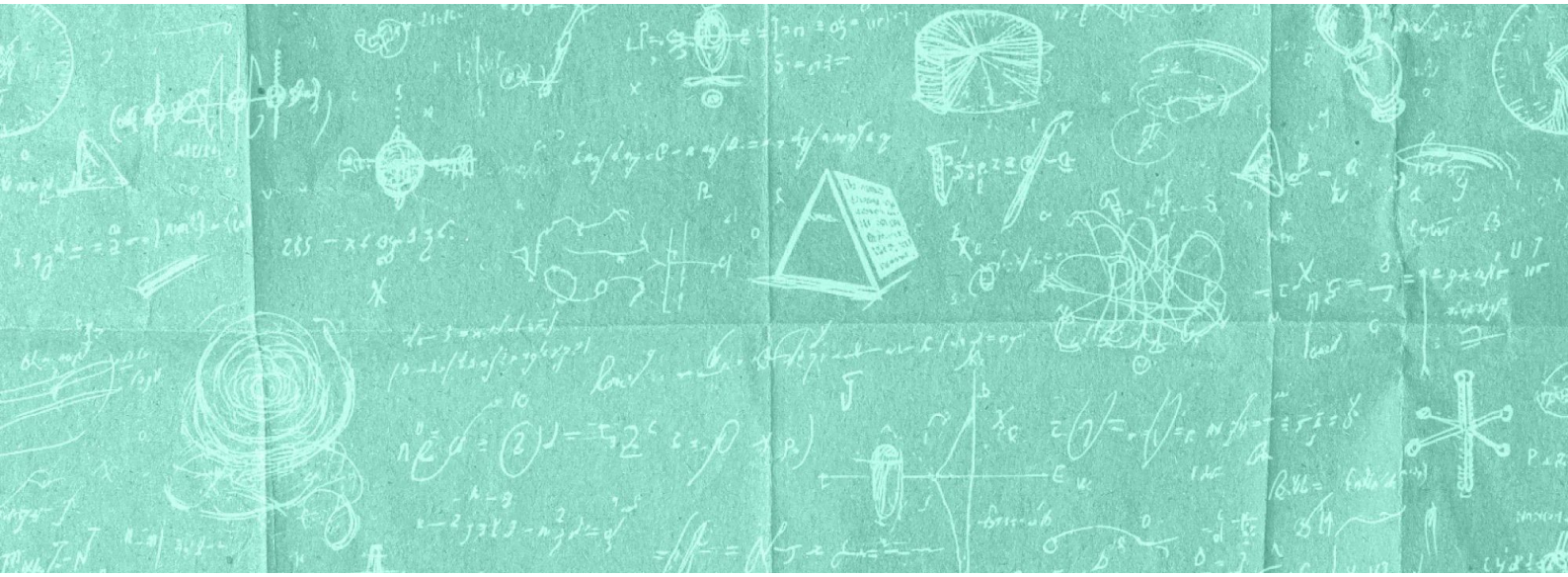
Consensus



FEATURE GUIDE FOR FACULTY

12 Consensus features profs love

How faculty are teaching and researching with AI without handing over the thinking — twelve features professors keep coming back to, and what each one is good for in a class.

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FEATURE GUIDE

12 Consensus Features Profs Love

How faculty are teaching and researching with AI without handing over the thinking.

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Students are using AI for coursework. That part is settled. What's still open is what good use looks like, and most of the useful answers have come from faculty working it out course by course.

Here are 12 features professors keep coming back to and why they love using them.

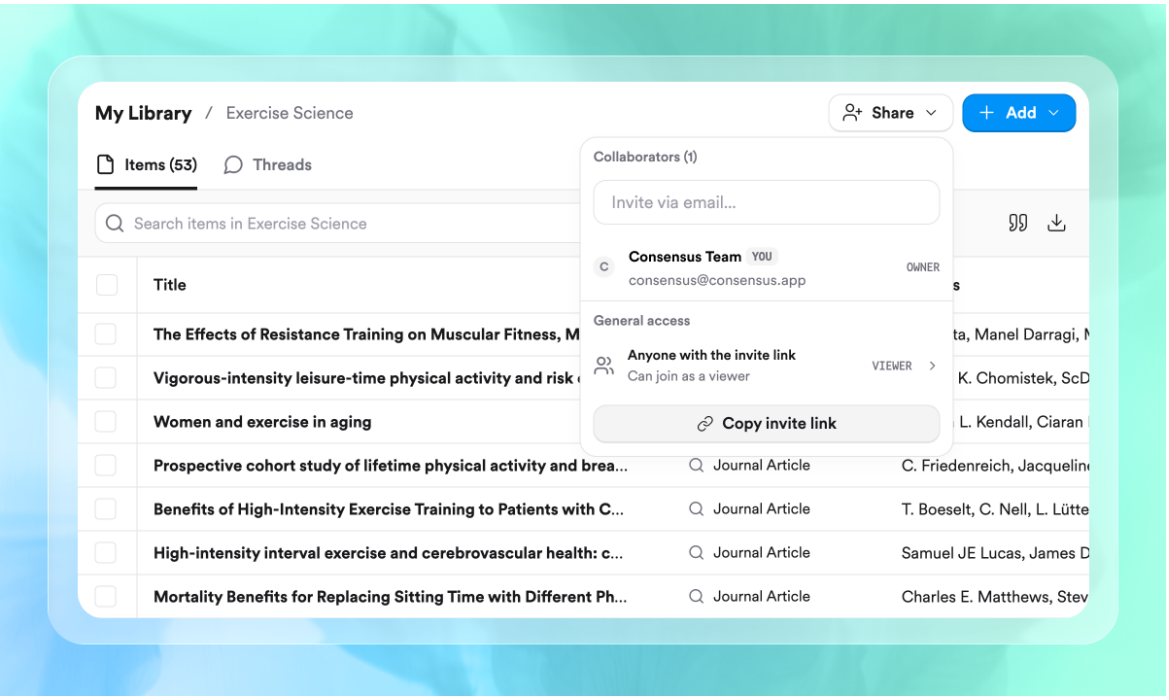
FEATURES 01–03

In the classroom

These three features are fundamental to shifting class time away from finding sources and toward judging them.

01 Shared Collections

Share a Collection by link or email and your reading list arrives as one folder in Consensus instead of a dozen attachments. Viewers can read every paper and run queries across the set to engage deeper with the literature.



Sharing a Collection. General access is where you set what an invited reader can do — "can join as a viewer" is the setting the exercise below asks for.

The searchability is what faculty report back on. A question like `"where do these papers disagree?"` becomes something a student can pursue in ten minutes.

BEFORE YOU SHARE

Check what's in the Collection: anything you've uploaded into it becomes visible to everyone you invite.

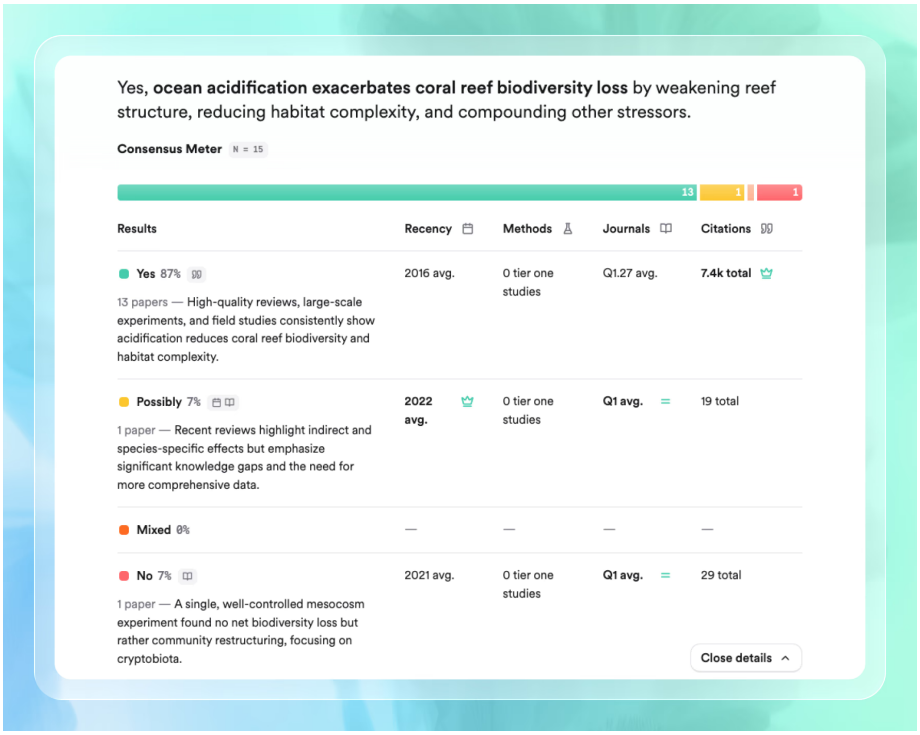
TRY THIS

Build one Collection for your next class, share it as Viewer, and make the first discussion question "find where two of these papers disagree."

02 The Consensus Meter

Ask a yes-or-no research question and the Meter sorts the retrieved papers into yes, no, and possibly, with the methodology, recency, journal quality, and citation weight behind each position.

For faculty it's a fast read on the shape of a literature: settled, contested, or thin. In class it does something more specific. Students routinely treat the size of the tally as the strength of the evidence, and the Meter is one of the few places where those two things can be pulled apart and looked at separately. A lopsided split can rest on small observational studies. A near-even one can have meta-analyses on a single side. Clicking into the positions is where that becomes visible.



Clicking into the positions. Each row carries its paper count and the methods, recency, journal quality and citations behind it — which is where a 7% "No" resting on a well-controlled experiment stops looking like noise.

WORTH FRAMING FOR STUDENTS

A map of the papers Consensus retrieved rather than a verdict on the question itself.

TRY THIS

Run one question your field considers settled and one it doesn't, side by side. The difference between the two meters is the quickest way to show students what "contested" actually looks like in a literature.

03 Ask Paper and Study Snapshots

Study Snapshot pulls a paper's population, design, outcomes, and sample size in one click. Ask Paper opens the full text to questions — about a figure, a limitation, a choice of control.

Both are aimed at the methods section, which is where the judgment in a paper lives and the part undergraduates skip. Whether they scaffold reading or replace it depends almost entirely on how the assignment is worded.

TRY THIS

Have students ask a paper `"what would make these findings not hold?"` and then locate that answer in the text themselves. Verification is the graded part.

FEATURES 04–06

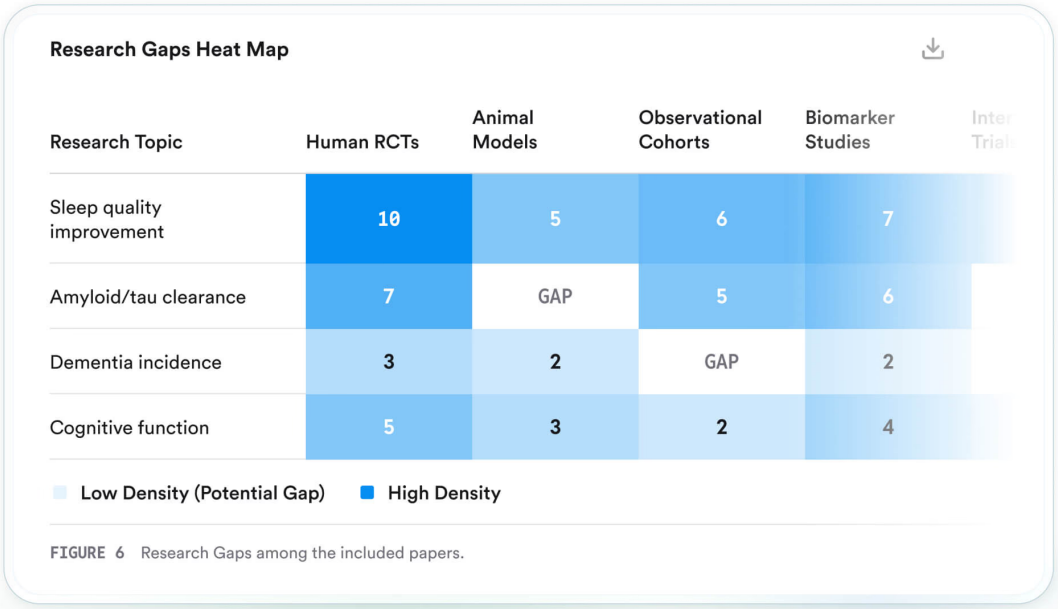
Getting the lay of the land

Whether it's course prep outside your specialty, a new student working on a topic you don't know well or a grant application in an adjacent area, these three features shorten the time from novice to advanced understanding.

04 Deep Search

It breaks a question into a multi-step strategy, runs up to 20 searches, reviews over a thousand papers, and builds a cited report from roughly 50 of them, structured like a literature review with a citations timeline, key authors, and a research-gaps matrix.

It's also worth running for the gaps matrix on its own. Advisors use it that way with students who need a topic, since the matrix shows what ground is already covered.



The research-gaps matrix from a Deep Search report. Topics down the side, study types across the top, paper counts in the cells.

TRY THIS

Run a Deep Search on your own dissertation topic and read only the research-gaps matrix. It's a quick way to judge whether the output is worth your students' time.

05 Citation Graph

Seed it with up to five papers you trust and it maps 20, 40, or 60 connected works. Time runs along the horizontal axis, citation weight vertical, and colour marks each seed's cluster. Ranking is based on citation relationships rather than keywords, so the graph surfaces work you wouldn't have thought to search for. The gray bridge papers sitting between clusters are often where a graduate student should be looking.



One seed paper, traced backward. Time runs left to right and node size tracks citation weight.

ONE LIMIT TO KNOW

Graphs don't save yet, so screenshot anything you want for class.

TRY THIS

Seed the graph with the paper your field considers foundational and ask students which cluster their own interests fall into.

06 Comparison tables

Table View extracts population, methods, results, sample size, and duration across a set of papers, side by side. For faculty it's the fastest way to see whether a group of studies is actually comparable.

In class, handing students a generated table and asking what it flattens tends to work better than handing them a blank one. Any table makes studies look more commensurable than they are.

TRY THIS

Generate a table across five papers, then ask your class which column is doing the most work and which one is misleading.

FEATURES 07–09

Working with what you already have

For a mid-career professor, the pitch here has nothing to do with a new corpus. Twenty years of accumulated reading becomes instantly searchable.

07 Zotero import

Import brings your Zotero library into Consensus — group collections included — where you can search across it, compare studies, and analyze folders. Turn your collection of citations from an archive into a living library.

TRY THIS

Import, then ask your own library a question you're confident you know the answer to. Watch Consensus surface exactly where that knowledge came from.

08 Uploading your own documents

Manuscripts, protocols, dissertations, grant proposals, internal reports. Upload up to twenty PDFs at a time, and they stay private unless you share a Collection containing them.

The classroom use is citation accuracy. Students upload a draft alongside the papers they've cited and ask whether the draft represents those papers correctly. Misrepresenting a source is one of the most common problems in undergraduate writing and one of the slowest to catch while grading, and this puts the check before submission instead of after.

TRY THIS

Before the next paper is due, have students upload their draft with their sources and ask which claims aren't supported by the papers they cited. Have them hand in what it flagged along with the essay.

09 Full-text access and institution linking

Link your account to your institution in settings and requests route through your library's subscriptions. Separately, Consensus reads full text from Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Sage, ACS, APA and AAAS among others, so its analysis draws on methods and discussion sections rather than abstracts alone.

Ninety seconds of setup, and it changes what undergraduates cite. A student who hits a paywall rarely comes back to that paper later — they cite whatever they could actually open.

TRY THIS

Set up institution linking, then put it on a week-one slide so your students can get all of the benefits of your library's subscriptions.

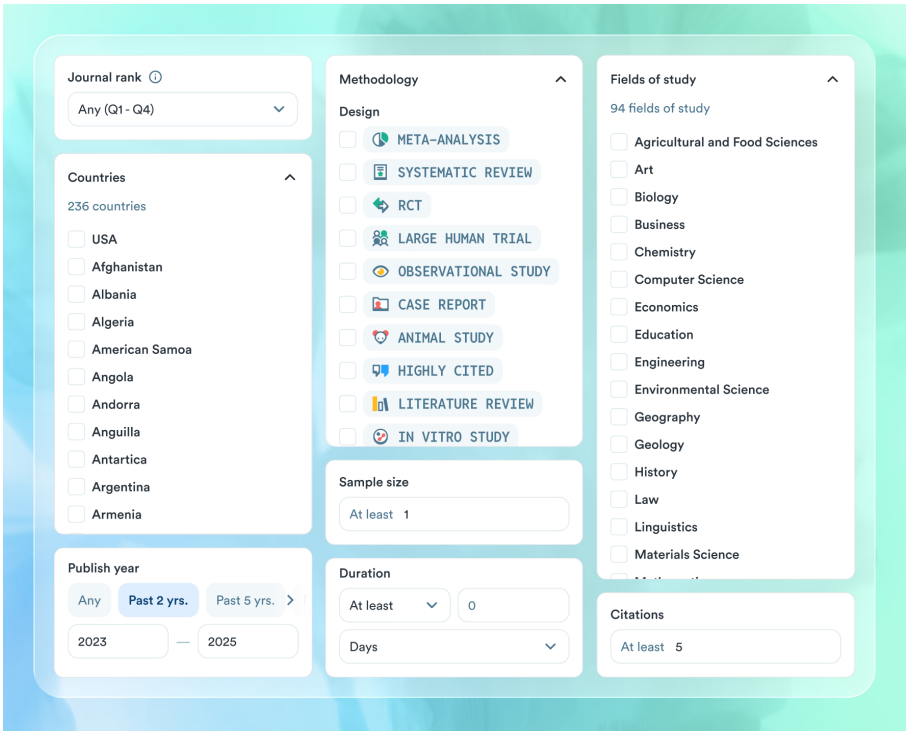
FEATURES 10–12

Building an AI-native research practice

These last three embed themselves beyond just the search box. They're about the terms you set for the AI, the work you hand it, and where you do that work. Faculty usually find these last.

10 Search filters

Nineteen study designs, plus sample size, study duration, SJR quartile, setting, field, country, and 44 publishers.



The full panel. Methodology is the column the exercise below runs on.

The teaching value shows up the moment a student restricts a search to randomized trials and watches most of the results vanish. Evidence hierarchy stops being a pyramid on a slide and turns into a tradeoff they have to make and then justify. When a filtered set comes back nearly empty, that's a finding of its own: the question hasn't been studied as rigorously as they assumed.

TRY THIS

One question, three passes. Unfiltered, then systematic reviews and meta-analyses only, then Q1 journals only. Ask which set they'd cite from, and how they'd defend that choice to a reviewer.

11 Research Agent

It plans searches, chains tools together, and returns cited answers, handling citation crawling, DOI lookup, author and co-author tracing, and gap analysis across a Collection. Constraints can be stated in plain language:

> **A constraint, stated in the sentence.**
> `"only randomized trials from the last five years in top-quartile journals."`

That last part matters for teaching. A first-year student can express a methodological constraint before they've learned where the filter panel is. It also produces more output to check, and an agent that chains tools well can still be wrong about what it found.

TRY THIS

Ask it something with the constraint built into the sentence, and watch what it does with the constraint.

12 Consensus MCP

Connecting Consensus to Claude or ChatGPT brings the corpus, the academic filters, and cited results into the assistant you already have open.

> **WHO THIS ONE IS FOR**
>
> We recommend the MCP for graduate students who already understand the fundamentals of research and are looking to create custom research systems. Students who are new to research should start by using the Consensus website.

The MCP allows ChatGPT or Claude to run a search in Consensus and return abstracts, titles, metadata, and the URL for relevant papers. For more advanced researchers, we also have an API available.

TRY THIS

Have your students write down their research process, including the work they do with Consensus. Together, identify areas where AI can be used for repetitive tasks at scale, or work autonomously in the background. These will be the foundations of AI-native research.

To find more examples of how to use the Consensus MCP, tutorials, and pre-made workflows visit consensus.app/home/mcp/.

WRAPPING UP

What these twelve features share is this: they surface the research process itself. Each one puts a contested claim, a citation path, a methodological choice, or a gap in the literature in front of a student — not as a black box to accept, but as something to interrogate.

Speed without judgment is worthless. These features compress the time it takes to make better judgments — to see disagreement, trace influence, spot weak design, identify what's missing.

That's still your work. Consensus just removes the friction between you and it.

Consensus

Which feature is doing the work in your course?

This list came from faculty telling us what they kept going back to. If there is a thirteenth — or a way you have used one of these twelve that we have not thought of — we would like to hear it.

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