

USING BOOK CLUBS IN THE CLASSROOM TO FOSTER STUDENT LEARNING

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Summary

Book Club can be a valuable teaching tool that:

1. Connects course content to “real-world” application
2. Fosters student engagement
3. Creates a sense of community amongst diverse students
4. Ultimately, deepens student learning

Why Book Club?

- Can be used in **many disciplines** (Cooper, 2019)
- Can “advance higher level **critical thinking skills**” (Switzer and Barclay, 2012)
- May contribute to “**greater engagement** and higher levels of **self-directed learning** when participating in book clubs over the course of the unit” (Randall and Marangell, 2020)
- May increase student enjoyment of a course, which, in turn, enhances learning (Cooper, 2019)
- May create classroom social capital (Cooper, 2019)

How does this connect to AI?

This is one example of a teaching tool that builds critical thinking skills, which are essential for students to develop in the age of AI.

How does it work?

Students read assigned pages at home

Students take online quiz

In class discussion in small groups

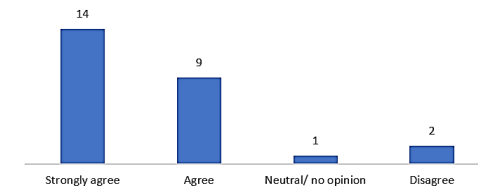
Class discussion + teaching related to book



Personal experience

- I have used for past 5 semesters in a 4000-level public health science course (25-30 students/ semester)
- Assigned book: “Mountains Beyond Mountains” (MBM)- case study highlighting Global Health course ideas

“Book Club discussions have been beneficial to my learning for this course.”



In mid-semester feedback, 88% of students (23 of 26) agreed or strongly agreed that Book Club discussions have been beneficial to their learning.

- Perceived benefits: Deeper learning; student enjoyment; real-world connections; classroom social capital; fostering curiosity in content
 - I’ve loved reading MBM because it brings the course material to life in a tangible and understandable way. It’s cool to see how all of the information has been applied in a **real-world scenario**”
 - “I appreciate the little **community** it has made and [it] makes me more comfortable in the class”
 - “Not only is MBM a phenomenal book (I’m going to give it to my grandmother for Christmas :)) but it also has gotten me back into reading. Now, after not reading for what seems like forever, I’ve finished two books in the last month and have no intention of slowing down! **It’s really nice to just find that love of learning again.**
- Perceived limitations: Commitment of class time; some students are more comfortable participating in small groups than others; instructor time and planning

Further exploration:

- Anne T. Switzer & Lizabeth A. Barclay (2012) Book Clubs: Best Practices in Promoting Critical Thinking in Business Classes, *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship*, 17:4, 328-345, DOI: 10.1080/08963568.2012.712635
- Cooper, C. A. (2019). Not Just for Oprah Anymore: Incorporating Book Clubs into Political Science Classes. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 15(3), 365–376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2018.1473783>
- Randall, Regine E. and Marangell, Joseph P.. (2020). One Story Creates Another: Using Book Clubs to Promote Inquiry in the Content Areas. i.e.: *inquiry in education*: Vol. 12: Iss. 2, Article 4. Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/ie/vol12/iss2/4>