

Reflection: Book Club

Alham Rahimi

Asian University for Women

Curriculum Development

Prof. Dr. Glenn DeVoogd

April 28, 2024

Book club is where readers come together to discuss a specific book or a topic or theme across several different book titles. Student interests, reading levels, and book accessibility may play a role in determining what titles your book club chooses to focus on (Book Club Basics | NEA, n.d.). The book club experience is social and a great way to motivate kids to read, get them talking about books, and have them share ideas and perspectives (Book Club Basics | NEA, n.d.). For my reflection, I chose the book club video (Jimmy Kimmel Live, 2015) because I was eager to know how book clubs can be helpful for primary students to think critically and express their opinions/ideas freely in different ways. I will reflect on what I learned from this video and discuss its strengths and weaknesses.

In this video, the teacher acts as a member of a book club, choosing “Good Night Moon” as a short story and interesting book for students. He asked students if they were familiar with the book or not because the purpose of a book club is to come together to discuss a book that all the members already read. The teacher started to read the book aloud to the students like a storyteller. In my opinion, it can be a key strength of this book club because by taking the role of storyteller, the teacher could control the pace and tone, creating an engaging and immersive experience. This also allowed the teacher to model fluent reading and expression, which can be beneficial for the students' literacy skills (Developing Fluent Readers | Reading Rockets, n.d.). The teacher had an effective interactive reading style and engaged students throughout the book club. For example, while reading the sentence: good night air! the teacher asked them to share what they knew or had noticed by asking “Who said goodnight to air?”. By this kind of question teacher aimed to prompt critical thinking and active participation among students.

During book club, having only one book available during the session was a weakness. The story could not be followed by every member/student visually while it was being read

because there were no copies for them to see. Some members may have felt disconnected from the text or missed out on visual cues that can help with understanding. Although interactive reading worked well with most students, there might have been times when it became difficult to keep all of them interested. Without any visual aids or personal books, some members especially children may have found it hard to remain fully involved throughout the reading (Developing Fluent Readers | Reading Rockets, n.d.).

In my opinion, in a book club, how to get every member involved in the discussion when they do not have direct access to the text can be considered a challenge. We should find ways of overcoming this problem by ensuring that all children contribute verbally or through gestures. Additionally, there seemed another challenge in controlling time so that each activity planned for the session would be completed within the expected limits (Bastawi, 2023). The teacher had a balance between reading out loud and discussing the story and that was commendable in the case of time management.

The teacher encouraged students to reflect on the story “Goodnight Moon” asking questions like: What was the book talking about? Where is the moon in the story and real life? Why did the author say goodnight to any objects? And so on in aiming to foster discussion among students that encouraged them to analyze the story's themes, make connections, and express their opinions. Asking whether they liked the story or not fostered a concluding discussion that allowed for reflection and expression of individual perspectives. Additionally, in a book club, members will be encouraged to listen actively to each other to build their communication skills. In the book club video, children listened to each other’s opinions carefully and commented on them respectfully.

In conclusion, I learned that important critical literacy activities that a book club includes can foster critical thinking, free expression, and a love for reading among younger students. When I go back to school as a teacher, I make sure to conduct such book clubs in aiming to promote participation, comprehension, and community building among my students. I am committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued and empowered to contribute.

References

Bastawi, E. S. I. (2023, July 12). Lome. Lome.

<https://grow.withlome.com/articles/book-club/how-to-run-a-book-club-discussion>

Book Club Basics | NEA. (n.d.).

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/read-across-america/celebrate-all-year/book-club-basics#:~:text=Readers%20can%20come%20together%20to,club%20chooses%20to%20focus%20on.>

Developing fluent Readers | Reading Rockets. (n.d.). Reading Rockets.

<https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/fluency/articles/developing-fluent-readers>

Jimmy Kimmel Live. (2015, February 5). Jimmy Kimmel's Book Club [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PLB58ePPbs>