



Transforming Students into Lifelong Learners: The Book Club Experience at RIT Central Library

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Abstract:

Reading is one of the most effective way to foster lifelong learning, creativity, intellectual curiosity, and personal and social development. The RIT Central Library, through its innovative activity 'Book Club', has successfully create a reading culture among students that goes beyond academics. This initiative strengthened students learning habits and contribute to promoting teamwork, improving presentation skills, confidence-building and leadership quality. This activity got positive feedback from faculty and students, and also got recognition as a model best practice in internal reports and from various committees. Book club significantly increased **library footfall and usage and created library as a** dynamic hub for learning rather than just a resource center.

This paper highlights the role of RIT Central Library's Book Club in enhancing students' academic performance, personal and social development, creativity, communication, presentation skills, confidence, leadership, and public speaking abilities, while nurturing them as lifelong learners. And from institutional perspective 'Book Club' significantly increased library footfall, library usage and how its recognized as model best practice internal reports and during accreditation visits.

Keyword: Library activity, Book Club, Best Practice, Library footfall, Lifelong Learners.

Introduction:

Reading is most powerful habit for any student for both academic and personal growth. It gives you knowledge and understanding that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning skills. For students, developing good reading habits helps improve focus, language ability, and overall academic performance which expanding perspectives outside the classroom. Libraries play a key role in fostering these habits by providing access to vast collection of books, journals, and digital resources They provide

access to vast resources collection, stimulate interest, and create spaces where students can engage in collaborative and independent learning. In this perspective, libraries are not just storage of books - they are powerful learning centers that motivate to research and social interaction. Recognizing this importance of reading RIT Central library implemented Book Club activity to enhance reading habit and created opportunities for students personal and social development, this activity gives a platform to discuss, share, reflect and present students reading experience, which build

confidence and leadership quality. This paper highlights how the RIT Central Library's Book Club activity has become one of the best ways to demonstrate the value of quality library services in enriching students' overall academic performance and making students lifelong learners.

Background of the Book Club:

RIT Central Library Book Club was started with the aim of inculcating the habit of reading technical as well as non-technical books among the students, so that teamwork, leadership qualities and presentation skills of the students are developed and thus young minds are transformed into lifelong learners. The initiative was started in 2017 with the aim of creating awareness and interest in extra-curricular reading.

The **objectives** of the Book Club are:

- **To promote regular reading habits:** We want to encourage students to explore literature beyond their academic curriculum and make the reading experience enjoyable by allowing them to choose books of their interest while setting aside specific time regularly.
- **To encourage discussions beyond textbooks:** Book clubs become a hub for discussions beyond textbooks, where each team selects one book, discusses it within their group, and presents it. Through this activity, students are encouraged to engage in meaningful discussions beyond their regular curriculum.
- **To develop communication and critical thinking skills:** Book Clubs help students develop communication and critical thinking skills by engaging with diverse literary works across languages and cultures. This reading enables them to think critically, which helps to build their confidence. Regular reading and

group discussions enhance their communication abilities and Presentation skill.

The Book Club provides an exclusive platform for students, faculty members, and research scholars to read books, engage in discussions, and present their ideas and viewpoints in front of judges and Students. The book club encourages everyone to explore diverse literature, which contributes to both academic and personal enrichment.

Structure and Activities:

Registration process for this activity is five students formed a group with a unique group name and selected one book for the Reading Club. Each group registered themselves in the library for participation in Book Club. After registration, the members were guided by the library staff regarding timelines, expectations, and preparation format. The students communally read the selected book, discussed the core themes or subject, and shared ideas with each other. Based on their reading or understanding, they prepared a book summary or review poster and a give written abstract of selected book for the competition. This entire process of a book club not only ensures the active participation of each member but also inspires teamwork, leadership, and collective thinking. By working together under a common group identity, it helps students develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their reading work.

The following activities are carried out in the book club:

Book reviews and discussions: In this activity, a group of students have selected a book of their choice, read it, and prepare a summary or review from their own viewpoints. In the summary, they identified the essence of the book and characters,

followed by open discussions and conversations where students exchanged their opinions and explanation. Such discussions help students broaden their understanding and acquire knowledge in multiple ways. Participants express their views through poster presentations in front of the audience. The presentations were evaluated by a panel of judges on the basis of creativity, content clarity, presentation, team work and effectiveness of delivery. The Book Club activity is conducted twice a year and is open to students from all streams.

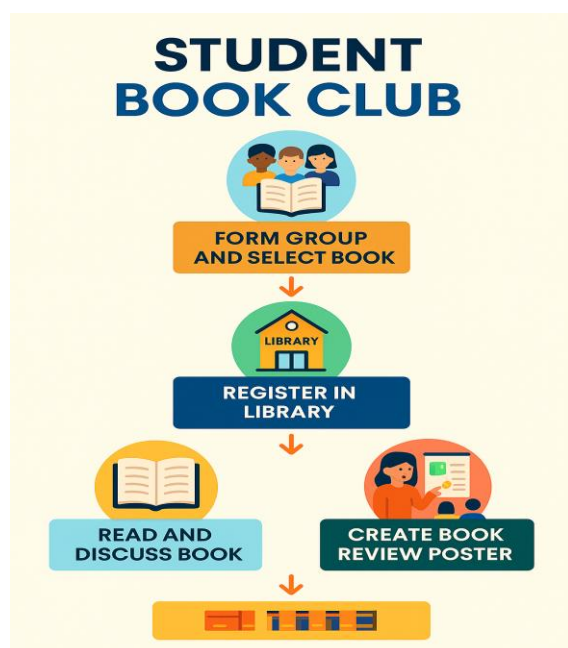


Figure 1: Student Book Club Activity Flow

Note: The flowchart was generated with the help of AI visualization tools. The author devised and contributed the intellectual substance, step sequence, and interpretation.

Benefits and Impact:

1. **Academic Growth:** Book clubs help to enhance student's vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking, it is a well-designed activity that helps students relax from their academic stress, and this reduction in stress refreshes their minds, thereby supporting their academic growth. Additionally, it promotes better

engagement with academic and research resources.

2. **Personal and Social Development:** Book clubs enhance presentation and communication skills while also improving teamwork and providing opportunities for collaborative learning, it helps students personal and social development.
3. **Library Engagement:** The Library Book Club inspires students to visit the library frequently and discover both technical and non-technical Books. This can help to increase library footfall and also helps to enhance the overall usage of books as well as print and e-resources.

Challenges and Solutions:

There are some challenges in implementing the Book Club initiative in the library. Some of these include low initial participation, as students are not immediately attracted to the club. Many are too busy with their academic commitments, while some show little interest in reading beyond textbooks. At times, academic overload or examinations reduce their involvement. In addition, the library occasionally faces a lack of resources and limited diversity in literary collections.

To overcome these challenges, the library can arrange awareness campaigns for students and faculty to encourage participation, schedule book club activities in a way that allows sufficient time for reading and discussion, and promote the use of digital resources so that students have easy access to a wider collection without limitations. This ensures that every student can find a proper time and conveniently access both print and e-resources.

Recognition and Feedback:

The RIT Central Library 'Book Club' activity has received positive feedbacks and appreciation from students and faculty. Students highlighted that this activity provides them an opportunity to explore literature and express their views on specific literature or book and showcase their presentation and leadership skills. This activity boosts student's communication and confidence. Students acknowledged this initiative as a meaningful platform to promote critical thinking, creativity, teamwork and leadership skills among students.

The 'Book Club' activity has also received institutional recognition. It has been acknowledged as a model best practice in internal reports, accreditation processes, and NAAC visits. Viewers, external experts, and all visiting committees have appreciated the book club activity for its extensive participation, its positive impact on student, and the culture of collaborative reading it promotes. This consideration has further supported the role of RIT Central Library, it proves that library is not only as a resource centre but also an active partner in students' overall development and institutional excellence.

The Book Club at RIT Central Library has started and grown potently since **2017** its launch, attracting students from various Streams including Degree, Diploma, MBA and BBA. In first few years, participation began with small groups of students, around 10 to 12 groups with 40–50 participants. As, the activity has grown in reach and impact, it expanded its scope to include MCA and BCA students, further to increase student's participation. These newer streams added additional groups and participants, reflecting the extensiveness of the Book Club initiative. From 2017 to 2025, the Book Club steadily

grew into one of the best activity of the RIT Central Library. During this period, it recorded 191 group registrations, 866 student participants, and facilitated the reading and discussion of 191 books covering a wide themes and genres. These numbers highlight not just the scale of participation but also the diversity of literature explored, different from motivational works and biographies to classics, management texts, and contemporary fiction. The consistent participation from different Streams students Degree, Diploma, MBA, MCA, BCA and BBA proves the inclusivity of the book club and its appeal to different academic backgrounds. This steady progress clearly reflects the Book Club's growth over the last eight years, developing across academic disciplines and establishing itself as a model of cooperative learning.

Recommendations and Future Research Directions:**1. Recommendations:**

1. Incorporate Book Clubs into the Academic Curriculum: Promote the official incorporation of book club activities into course modules. Faculty may synchronize suggested readings with discipline-specific topics to boost academic learning and personal development.
2. Interdisciplinary Engagement: Encourage involvement from students in all disciplines (engineering, management, arts, etc.) to foster multidisciplinary viewpoints, enhanced cultural literacy, and innovative problem-solving abilities.
3. Utilization of Technology and Digital Platforms: Broaden the book club via online discussion forums, library portals, and collaboration platforms to

facilitate student engagement outside the physical library environment.

4. Ongoing Training and Guidance : Educate student leaders and facilitators in communication, moderation, and critical thinking to transform the book club into a leadership incubator.
5. Assessment and Feedback Mechanism: Implement systematic rubrics for evaluating teamwork, creativity, subject analysis, and presentation, while also gathering regular participant input to enhance the activity continuously.
6. Collaboration with Authors and Specialists: Facilitate interactive meetings with authors, literary critics, or subject matter experts to motivate students and provide them with professional insights on literature and knowledge acquisition.

2. Future Research Directions:

1. Influence on Lifelong Learning Competencies: Implement longitudinal research to evaluate the impact of book club involvement on students' motivation, critical thinking, empathy, and autonomous learning behaviours over time.
2. Comparative Analyses: Analyze the outcomes of book clubs across various institutions (technical versus liberal arts universities) to discern contextual advantages and obstacles.
3. Virtual versus Traditional Book Clubs: Examine the distinctions in involvement, collaboration, and educational outcomes between conventional in-person book clubs and virtual reading groups.
4. The Function of Libraries in Student Engagement: Examine the role of academic libraries as centers for student-focused co-curricular activities

and the impact of book clubs on the visibility and significance of libraries in higher education.

5. Psychological and Social Consequences: Examine the impact of book clubs on students' emotional intelligence, communication abilities, collaborative skills, and leadership attributes.
6. Integration of Artificial Intelligence and Gamification: Assess the efficacy of AI tools (for summarization and suggestions) and gamified strategies (such as badges and reading challenges) in maintaining sustained engagement and enthusiasm over the long run.

Conclusion:

The RIT Central Library is enhancing faculty and student success through its huge collection, digital resources, advanced automation, and dedicated support services and facilities. RIT Central Library's Book Club activity has played an important and significant role in promoting and cultivating a culture of reading and lifelong learning among every student. By enforcing library activities like book club library motivating for group discussions, innovative presentations, and to search of literature beyond textbooks, the Library book club has contributed to the academic enrichment and personal growth of students. This initiative highlights the importance of libraries' role as dynamic knowledge centres, going beyond providing resources for the holistic development of students. The success of the RIT Central Library Book Club proves how such activities can strengthen communication skill, teamwork critical thinking and confidence among learners or students. This initiative undertaken by the RIT Library have significantly contributed to the institute's academic

environment, fostering a habit of lifelong learning. Given its impact, other colleges, school libraries should execute similar activities to promote vibrant learning communities and make libraries active partners in creating future-ready students and lifelong learners.

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