

Common Reading Survey 2009-2010 Results
Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson

A. Please complete the information below

	Session I 2:30 – 3:15
Number of students who read the entire book (or most of it) Use your judgment.	643 = 63%
Approximate percent of group that participated in the discussion (word description is fine; everyone, one-half, etc.	782 = 76%
Number of students in the session	N = 1024

B. If students did not read the book or only a little of it, did they say why? (The number in parenthesis is the number of students who made that comment.)

- Didn't take the time (2)
- Lost interest – too repetitive (4)
- Not well written – too scattered, hard to follow, didn't like writing style (5)
- Boring – read if only had nothing else to do (8)
- Too long and detailed (9)
- Too many strange words (2)
- Felt like I was reading one long New York Times article (documentary) (5)
- Lack of time (10)
- Couldn't see the point (1)
- No grade or paper attached (no penalty for not reading) (2)
- Lost the book (1)
- Started reading it too late (1)

C. Please add comments about the common reading discussion in this session that you want to share.

- Required reading turns many off to book
- Good message, but too much detail not necessary to convey message
- Like idea of common reading (good introduction to classroom), but would prefer more of a “story” or novel
- I think we should choose one or more articles stories, or novellas that we were sure they would read. There are many choices that relate directly or indirectly to modern dilemma
- Most found the book inspiring. They got the “everyman” in Mortenson, but believe that his unique background put him in the right frame of mind to be willing to serve
- Excellent discussion. Students were thoughtful and very concerned. They were appreciative of the author's effort
- In spite of their complaints about the book, students did say that they would be likely to tell others about GM's story and/or to recommend the book for skimming

- During the session, students were asked to identify GM's best and most problematic decisions. All were in agreement that his best decisions were acting on his impulse to help, becoming familiar with Pakistani culture and religion and, conversely, refraining from imposing western cultural and religious values on a foreign people. All were also in agreement that providing educational opportunities in the Middle East would ultimately help to resolve current conflicts. Interestingly, many students thought that GM's primary "mistake" was getting married and starting a family, partly because his job took him away from home for extended periods of time and partly because his income was so low.
- Much better participation and preparation than last year. Most students commented on how the book offered a diff perspective to wars in M. East
- Some felt he needed to make his family a greater priority; others expressed concern about the Taliban overrunning the schools; but most were great fans of his effort and signed up for the drive
- Once we got into it, even those who'd only read part seemed to have some solid insights in Mortenson's character and goals – a few were really touched by his idealism. And many said they'd read all of it eventually.
- Those who spoke had insightful comments to share. I was disappointed that more students didn't participate.
- Overall they did not like the book, but talked about it thoughtfully and productively. I enjoyed it. Discussion prompts posted online were very helpful.
- I had the students watch a brief interview with Greg Mortenson and most seemed to enjoy hearing him describe how the bridge changed Kophe
- The students loved the book and had meaningful comments to contribute
- Some students offered impressive insights based on a fairly close reading and reflection on the book. For example, we talked about personal growth, facing physical challenges and the purpose and meaning of life.
- A few students had really good comments and contributions
- Too many seemed uninterested and unprepared. I still like the book, and in the end, most students actually said it is a good book to keep
- It was great! Would like to do it next year!! (Same book)
- They were open and came up with good comments. They saw how many barriers Mortenson faced and admired his perseverance. One player commented that it made him feel his life obstacles were very small.
- One group was a good discussion and the second group was a rich discussion. Both groups talked a lot about the hospitality aspect and the importance of communication through actions of hospitality
- I think we need to read something heavier
- First group was great; second group required dentistry. I assume most in group 2 did not read, but also discerned some were reticent to speak unless directly called upon.
- A couple of students had read the book in high school, but most said they liked it and learned a lot from it. Discussion was excellent and went over time by a couple of minutes. We had to shut off topics and move on to address key themes
- Having 20 in this group was somewhat difficult —hard for all to participate in only 50 minutes
- Compared to my 2nd session more of these had read, so the discussions were much better. Talked a lot about students' application of the principles of service here at CNU
- I was spoiled last year. That was a GREAT group, but this was an interested one
- Students seemed mostly receptive to Mortenson's story, though many said they felt his life was so different from theirs that they found it difficult to identify with him
- Those who participated had many interesting comments – they obviously had done some thinking about the issues
- Students responded well to the reading; there were many different viewpoints presented and discussed. Almost all saw Greg Mortenson as a "superhero" and felt they could not be like that, yet most agreed they would do "something".
- I was surprised that so many students had conjured negative feelings about Mortenson that he saw himself as a Christ figure, etc. We spun that into interesting discussion, however.
- Again this year the students were engaged, perceptive, and arrived at very intelligent observations about the book and Greg Mortenson. Many students have had experience with outdoor activities

- and challenges. They value the beauty of our endangered world. Also many of them have engaged in volunteer services in their communities and churches. Their backgrounds helped them identify with Mortenson and his goals.
- It was very disappointing to realize that so few had read the book; in addition, among those few there was not a single one who felt inspired by the text and wanted to participate in “Pennies for Peace”.
 - Most students seemed to have read the book, some more closely than others. Interesting discussion with some insightful comments made by two or three of the students.
 - Students talked about a lot of what we discussed during the faculty gathering earlier in the week. We had a good, thought-provoking, discussion
 - I was surprised (pleasantly) that half had read it all and almost all had read half.
 - Very nice – had some energetic students who made interesting observations.
 - The students had some strong opinions – stronger than last year, to some extent. Good discussion
 - I found it useful to spend half the time talking about the book and the other half discussing college life (e.g., what to expect)
 - Students who did read the book seemed to get the thrust of its purpose and admired Mortenson for his dedication, persistence, and tenacity. Several students thought Mortenson was unbalanced as he forfeited so much of his personal life to pursue his goal. Several students commented they had problems with the book (too much description, too detailed, author’s bias)
 - Really great group of students
 - A great discussion—lots of positive, specific comments from the students!!
 - Each student spoke a “key” word, then explained why they selected this word to capture the essence of 3 Cups of Tea (List of words given)
 - It would be helpful if students learned some basics about the culture before reading the book
 - They really liked the idea of the book and what Greg was trying to do and engaged well on discussion of that. Also most agreed it gave them a new feel for that part of the world and its people.
 - I love that we do this...even if all students don’t read. I love the tone that the common reading sets for their education here.

D. Suggestions for books, plays, articles, movies, etc to consider for next year’s common reading. Please explain why you feel each would be a good choice.

- Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracey Kidder
- Late Harry Potter book (student suggestion)
- The Kite Runner
- Great speeches from critical times by great leaders
- The Rise of David Levinsky by Abraham Cahan
- Debate the choice of book
- I personally would prefer that they read something rather controversial (e.g. Chris Hedges Empire of Illusion) but also realize that parents might be upset.
- Hot, Flat and Crowded by Thomas Friedman
- Cradle to Cradle by Wm. McDonough
- Man’s Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl
- Infidel by Ayaan Hirsi Ali
- Last Lecture
- Nickel and Dimed by Ehrenreich
- The Life of Pi (student suggestion)
- Into Thin Air (student suggestion)
- Go Ask Alice (student suggestion)
- Stay with this book
- Three Cups of Tea with the goal to build a school sponsored by CNU
- Mountains Beyond Mountains
- Liberty and Tyranny by Mark Leuin (sp?)
- The Road by Cormac McCarthy
- Tuesdays with Morie (student suggestion)

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- A Thousand Points of Light (student suggestion)
- 1984 (student suggestion)
- Water for Elephants (student suggestion)
- A Separate Peace (student suggestion)
- A Prayer for Owen Meany (student suggestion)
- The Uglies, The Pretties and The Specials by Scott Westerfield:series of three books (student suggestions)