

Common Reading Survey Results
Fall 2008
Three Cups of Tea

Student Attendance

As of 09.03.2008, attendance sheets indicated 896 students attended the common reading discussion. There may be some discussion leaders who did not take attendance or have not gotten their attendance sheets to me (I received 53 attendance sheets). The 896 students represent 79% of the freshman class. The average size of each section was 16.9 students, but the section size ranged from 6 to 24.

Amount of Book Students Read

Leaders of 44 of 64 sections submitted their surveys, so the numbers below are somewhat representative of all the sections. The averages below are informative, but because each discussion section was not the same size, the results should not be generalized.

Furthermore, question A. was not clear (my fault) – the second part of the question should have been stated “Chapters 1-12 only” so as to differentiate “a. The entire book” from “b: Chapters 1 -12”. Where I could, I made the result in “b” not include “a”.

1. Averages and range for amount of book read

<u>Amount Read</u>	<u>Average per section</u>	<u>Range across sections</u>
a: The entire book	5.9 students	23 – 0 students
b. Chapters 1-12	8.3	20 – 0
c. Little or none of book	3.6	10 – 0

2. Students’ participation in the discussion

Of the 44 sections for which I received survey results, only 3 answered “No” to the prompt: The majority of students participated in the discussion.

3. Other comments:

Notes: Students were randomly assigned to the session they attend. It would take more manpower than we have to assign students to particular sessions. There was some miscommunication with Student Affairs and the times for the common reading were incorrect in the Passport students received.

- We had a lot of on-going conversation – everyone had read at least some of the book. Overall much better than my experience last year.
- What a productive session! We could have continued for another hour. Students had some trouble with room numbers in Ratcliff.
- Well prepared – a great discussion
- Students recommend for next year
- Great Book. Students participated in discussion
- It was a good discussion. At the beginning, discussion revolved mainly around issues I brought up, but eventually students came up with their own discussion points, focusing then on the question of where help is needed (nationally or internationally)

and whether and how we can help in both ways. I recommend using same book again.

- Discussion was centered on Book themes – so those who didn't read it -> could contribute
- It was a great group, most students had read enough of the book to facilitate discussion.
- Seemed to go well. As I previously mentioned, 5 of the 23 students would recommend the same book next year. I really enjoyed the book, and do not have an alternate selection for next year
- More time needed. Assign universal questions for all freshmen to answer in writing prior to coming to campus – make them read and do the questions and we all discuss answers to same questions in class.
- Dividing into groups with prompts was excellent for interaction. The group chose a spokesperson and secretary and reported after the 25 minutes allowed for discussion. Rooms in Ratcliff were hard to find. Name tags would be helpful to all.
- I did not ask them how much they read. We began by having everybody say what they had learned from it, and they all had something to say. Some of course had read more carefully but there were plenty of ideas to keep discussion moving.
- This group was more lively, so the discussion went well, but their knowledge of the book seemed more superficial. That is why I'm assuming they read less of it, but they clearly read some.
- They said the first few chapters were “dry”
- Several students asked why they weren't required to read the entire book. Reading ½ a book sends the wrong message about “sampling” something.
- I believe much of the success of the discussion really depends on the facilitator. The average of those who have read will likely be consistent. There are ways to generate discussion even if some have not read. Our discussion went fairly well. The list of questions was really helpful.
- Encourage students to read entire book (required). Overall, I was pleasantly surprised by number of students who had done the assignment and were willing to discuss their ideas. I'm glad that I was able to participate and look forward to next year. One final note: I don't know if all of the students who were assigned to my section came to class. (Twelve came.) Also, there was some confusion and 2 or 3 arrived fifteen minutes late.
- I divided them into groups. The student reviews of the book seemed mixed (more negative than last year). They supported Mortenson's effort but questioned his commitment to family and the possibility for success without military security.
- I really enjoyed this and hope to do it again next year.
- Having a roll/list of the students assigned to our room would be helpful.
- Both sessions seemed better than last year.
- Loved all of it.
- I developed four questions to discuss in groups first. The discussion was really interesting and easier to lead because of it.
- Why isn't this book used for the QEP prompt in ULLC 100? (Bartels – it was used in the Oral Communication Assessment students took that week.)

- Cultural aspects, political and even geographic aspects were weak during student discussions.
- I was very disappointed with this experience. No one read the books and only 3 students would talk. I think the book was too “over their heads” and they would not relate to it. I suggest maybe doing a movie instead!!
- Please use this book next year, if possible. Themes of this book were much better than previous selection.
- Good, thoughtful discussion. The book worked well.
- Both sessions were heads and shoulders above the session that I led last year. Students came. They had read. They were interested, and they talked.
- My discussion went very well. Most if not all students participated.
- I divided the students into five groups and gave each group a different question. They discussed the question for 15 minutes and then presented their decisions to the class. This allowed for more interaction on their parts.
- Book was a very good one – spawned many angles of discussion and was easy to generate student interest. I would again offer the thought that there would be more continuity to the usefulness of the text if we had these students in a First Year Seminar, etc.
- We had a spectacular discussion – and learned everyone’s names as well.
- One or two did most of the talking...about the book. Others would more generalized discussion about, say, the nature of “wisdom”, following one’s path,etc.
- One of the two who read the book came up afterward and shook my hand, saying the discussion was much better than he had expected. I am very sorry that the decision was made to allow students to read only the first 12 chapters. To my amazement, I heard faculty admit that they had read only 12 chapters. Shouldn’t CNU be challenging students? Are we ending a pretty sad message when we ask them to read less than the whole book? Personally, I cannot support this very incomplete approach to setting up a freshman’s first classroom experience with CNU faculty. While I did my best to make these sessions successful, I felt very compromised as a teacher, esp. since I had learned only a few nights earlier that students needed to read less than one half of a wonderful and very readable work of nonfiction.

C. Suggestions for next year’s reading.

- Repeat Three Cups...
- With the interest in service, we could use the same book.
- I think we should keep 3 Cups of Tea
- Suggest holding another meeting of faculty who participated to “de-brief” and share our experiences!
- Use the same book again. Bring in Tara Bishop – who could live with HIM?
- Most students liked the book
- Let’s try this one again.
- I like this book but it needs to be read entirely and then it should be the focus of book 1 in Freshman Seminar
- I think we should use the same book and try to get Greg to come here!
- A stronger female perspective or a female protagonist would be a welcomed change.