

Journal Club: How to become expert

My first introduction to journal club was on a trip to the Cal tech library in Pasadena California. While I was searching for a book, the head of JPL (Jet Propulsion Lab) started leading the journal club for some of the top astrophysicists students and the world. As I stood back in the library taking note of the procedure. The graduate students came out to a meeting where hot coffee and sausages were sizzling. They gathered around a presentation by one of them of a paper that he had chosen as worthy of discussion. When these students graduated they would all start jobs paying over \$200,000 a year perhaps leading many of the world's astrophysics programs. What were they doing that was so beneficial to their learning? I think any one that observed this event would have been mesmerized by how much the students were teaching each other. They'd all been given a copy of the paper and we're prepared to criticize it. If it works at the highest level of education cannot it work at all levels of education. They were attacking the logic the science and the actual writing of what they were studying.

Who participates in the journal club?

Two or more people interested in the same topic who want to learn the newest ideas in the world.

Age is unimportant, you will learn to use the literature as you work with it.

RULES

There should be agreement on how often the club meets once a week once a month or whatever is agreed upon. All members of the Journal Club rotate through presenting. If there are four jointly doing a presentation, the first person can tell what they did. The second person can present what they found. In the third person can discuss whether their findings were justified by what they did. In other words was the work convincing. The fourth person can tell what was new and what it means in the real world.

One of the most challenging parts of the journey club is the selection of a "good paper" to discuss. That simple question is amazingly valuable in that it leads to judgment calls on your part. As the club's gets going the papers will get better.

Purpose or goal:

To become familiar with the literature in a subject of interest. Learn by doing utilizing and developing judgment. Select which you think is a good work for appraisal.

Analyze: what was done (WTD)

Determine: what they found (WTF)

Judge: whether findings justified by what they did. (WTFJBWTD)

Defend open for discussion/critique

- any logical errors?
- any procedural errors?
- Any question of 'best practices'

What new information was added to our understanding?

Journal Club's should be operating in businesses, hospitals, dental clinics, colleges and university departments, high schools, and Junior High schools. A nation that is not learning and critiquing new ideas and thoughts is a nation in decline. The skills take practice.

A list of journals is certainly not inclusive.

-Occupational journals or records

-Scientific Journals or all kinds

Astronomy

Biology

Medicine

Law

Physics

Engineering

Math

Theology

Philosophy

Music

History

Literature

Political

War

-Business Journals, and many more topics

[you have to get your feet wet to see how valuable it is)