



FRONT-LINE MANUFACTURING TEAM

A Books@Work Case Study

In professor-led literature seminars, Books@Work builds human capacity to imagine, innovate and connect, strengthens a culture of trust, respect and inclusion and enables personal and collective transformation.

The Program

Over the course of two three-month programs, a front-line manufacturing team has gathered for an hour each week to discuss literature. With faculty members from a local college, the team has discussed short stories, novels, and nonfiction.

Participant Reflections

In interviews, participants reflected on the Books@Work experience, appreciating the way Books@Work:

- established bonds between participants and encouraged them to recognize other perspectives.

"It makes you come together, and it makes you talk to other people that you work with and see things from their perspective, getting different ideas out there."

"We learn a lot about each other [. . .] We all have different things that go on in life, and we relate these things to what we read [. . .] It makes a bonding between the employees that are here."

- increased participants' respect for and understanding of others.

"I realized that there's a little more depth to some of these guys than I knew before, and hopefully they thought the same thing about me."

- encouraged critical dialogue and fostered critical thinking.

"Honestly, we disagreed [. . .] Then by the time our hour was up, we had gone, 'Maybe you aren't always so right or wrong. There's a gray area sometimes. It's not black or white.' I didn't always see that gray area. I tend to see that more now."

"[The professor] taught me to look past what was written on the page to see the story behind the story. [As a team coordinator] I've been able to solve some of the problems I didn't know were there just by looking past what I was being told by [my colleagues]."

Supervisor Reflections

The manufacturing team's supervisor appreciated the way Books@Work created a sense of community and an ease of communication between himself and the team.

"Overall, the people in that group were more comfortable expressing themselves in different forums, and way more comfortable with me as their boss."

"It was interesting to sit with the team and talk about our own perspectives and have a professor to bring it into focus. It brought our work group closer together, opened up lines of communication, [and] broke down barriers."

Selected Seminar Readings

Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

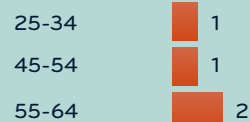
Jim Shepherd, *You Think That's Bad*

Tobias Wolff, *The Night in Question*

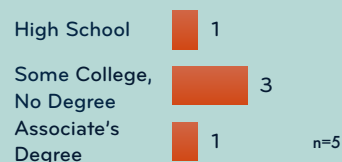
Demographic Information

The team consisted of one woman and four men, representing a range of ages and educational experiences.

Age Ranges



Education



In post-program surveys:

100%
of respondents indicated that they found the program worthwhile.

100%
of respondents indicated that they would like to participate in the program again.

n=5

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