

How to run an effective journal club

These recommendations have been adapted from Deenadayalan et al. (2008) who identified characteristics of effective journal clubs based on a systematic review of literature from healthcare.

Journal club attendance



- Establish a journal club group of members of the same subject specialism, or similar interests.

Journal club purpose



- Have an established and agreed overarching, long-term goal for the journal club. The overarching journal club purpose should be reviewed regularly, and agreed by participants
- Establish the purpose of each journal club meeting, and link this to the paper being read, or the skill acquisition being addressed.

Structure of an effective journal club



- Regular attendance should be expected. Attendance may be mandatory, particularly if the journal club has a curriculum-based format
- Conduct journal clubs at regular predictable intervals (suggest monthly)
- Conduct journal club at an appropriate time of the day for all participants
- Provide incentives to attend such as food (which is shown to increase attendance as well as the conviviality of the occasion).

Leading journal clubs



- Journal clubs appear to be more effective if they have a leader. The journal club leader should be responsible for identifying relevant articles for discussion, however the final choice needs to be decided by the journal club members.

- Ideally, the leader/facilitator of the journal club would have some relevant knowledge of research design and/or statistical knowledge so as to appropriately direct group discussions and assist the group to work towards its goals
- The leader can change from meeting to meeting, however he/she needs to have the skills to present the paper under discussion and lead the group adequately.

Choosing articles for discussion



- Choose relevant articles for discussion. These papers should be of interest to all participants. Articles should be chosen in line with the overarching purpose of the journal club
- Identify one journal club member (either the designated leader or a member) who has the responsibility for identifying the literature to be discussed for each meeting. This person should also lead the discussion on the article at the journal club.

Circulating articles for discussion



- Provide all participants for each journal club (in addition to the leader) with pre-reading at a suitable time period prior to the journal club (may be up to a week prior). Participants should agree to the time frame for pre-reading.
- Use the internet as a means of distributing articles prior to the meeting, maintaining journal club resources and optimising use of time and resources.

Efficiently running the journal club



- Use established critical appraisal approaches and structured worksheets during the journal club session to help with healthy and productive discussion.
- Formally conclude each journal club by putting the article in context of classroom practice.

Journal club effectiveness



- Depending on the journal club purpose, it may be appropriate to evaluate knowledge uptake formally or informally
- Evaluation should specifically relate to the article(s) for discussion, critical appraisal, understanding of statistics reported in the paper and translating evidence into practice.

Journal Club Checklist

Before your meeting

- Choose an appropriate article using the '[Article Selection Guide](#)'.
- Send this month's article together with the CAT to all participants.
- Make sure you have booked a meeting room or set up a meeting on a video conferencing software and sent the details to all participants.
- If you are meeting in person, try to arrange snacks/tea as these have been found to be beneficial in increasing attendance and motivation.

On the day

- Log on/get to the room 5 minutes before the start of the meeting to make sure that everything is working.
- Make sure that all participants are there before you start.
- **Welcome** participants and if this is the first session, ask everybody to briefly introduce themselves.
- If you are meeting online:
 - Ask participants to **mute themselves unless they are speaking** to avoid background noise and feedback.
 - Check that participants have beverages/snacks to hand.
- **Discuss** how participants have implemented learning from the article you read and discussed last month.
 - Encourage participants to think about any **differences between their experience and findings** reported in the article.
- **Discuss** this month's article using the CAT to guide your discussion.
 - Make sure that **all participants contribute to the discussion.**
- Invite participants to share how they are planning to implement learning from the article in their classrooms.
- Wrap up by briefly summarising your discussion.
- Ask if they have any other questions.
- Inform participants about the **date and time of your next meeting.**

Try to stick as closely as possible to the following schedule:



5 min Welcome & Housekeeping

10 minutes Discussion on how participants implemented learning from the article you discussed in the previous month (based on the '**post-implementation reflection**' section of the self-reflection tool)

30 minutes Article appraisal (based on **CAT**)

10 minutes Participants discussing the change they will attempt to implement in their classroom

5 minutes Close

Reference

Deenadayalan Y, Grimmer-Somers K, Prior M and Kumar S (2008) How to run an effective journal club: a systematic review. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 14, pp. 898-911.