**Managing Book Clubs as a Side Dish**

**Book Clubs**(Literature Circles Lite)

Literature Circles really excited me, but being a planning-impaired person, they were overwhelming.  So I toned them down to Book Clubs that are much simpler and can run while plenty of other standards-based instruction and writing take up most of your instructional time.  The amount of class time spent on Book Clubs each month varies depending on what else we are doing. But *every month*, they get to choose a new Book Club book.

The excitement in the classroom when it is time to choose new Book Clubs is, dare I say it? Palpable.  Just yesterday, Jacob R. Said, “I love it when we get to choose new Book Clubs.”

Some months there isn’t much time to really *do* much with their books.  Instead of feeling guilty, I realized the kids still all read one more excellent book.  And scarcity of meeting time heightens the value of meeting times to the students. Maybe cut this.

A month with very minimal time spent with Book Clubs would consist of four or five lessons/meetings a month.

Day One: Twenty minutes to introduce the book choices, kids fill out a small ballot listing their favorite to least favorite.  This could even be simplified to having students write their preferences on a piece of paper.

Day Two: At least 30 minutes to distribute and identify new clubs.  Students meet in their new book clubs to fill out the [Book Club Status](http://ridingreaders.weebly.com/the-forgotten-standard-resources.html) sheet and identify how they will divide the book up over the month.  Students are free to read ahead, this makes the reading more manageable for reluctant readers.  As the year progresses, students rarely take the whole month to finish their book.

Additional days: One or more meetings during the month in which the students take status and discuss their book.  They might do a simple group statement for grading. (See sidebar for discussion formats to encourage equal participation in discussion)

My preference is to do an end of book activity.  These include a variety of alternative book projects, varying in complexity and time needed.  Visit [Ridingreaders.weebly.com](http://ridingreaders.weebly.com/common-core-ela-resources.html) where there are a number of files shared for these end of book activities.

Book Clubs don’t have to dominate your Language Arts period. In fact, part of why they are so popular is the scarcity of meetings. Students are so happy to be interacting with each other, it doesn’t feel like work to them.  Every June, my students tell me Book Clubs are a big reason they now have a love for reading.