Books@Work brings professors into the workplace to build critical thinking and lifelong learning through the discussion of great literature.

The Program
A major urban medical center located in Northeast Ohio hosted Books@Work for four months. Sponsored by the Center’s Learning & Development Department, a cross-hierarchical, cross-functional group of participants met weekly with professors from Case Western Reserve and Cleveland State to discuss the readings and debate human themes.

Program Outcomes & Participant Reflections
In interviews, participants reflected on the Books@Work experience, appreciating the way in which Books@Work:

- created/deepened interpersonal connections and encouraged respect
  "I met people I would not have met through our different roles here. These are new relationships based on respect and shared interests."
  "I am more aware of how simple interactions/conversations can be interpreted differently from how they are intended. I now try to make sure that my word choices are more clear and seek feedback about understanding what was discussed."

- offered space for diverse perspectives
  "We have a diverse culture of employees here and two of the three books we read involved race and religion. Both contributed to a better appreciation of everyone’s culture."

- fostered communication and listening skills
  "It’s being able to talk about difficult things with people - what you learn from an experience like that, you can take into other situations."
  "It heightened sensitivity - when patients are upset I pay a lot of attention to the words they use. And it made me more conscious of the words I use."
  "I listen better now."

- encouraged a new way to think about the workplace
  "Why would you want to do this at work? Well, why would we want to do non-technical mind development at work? Just the same reason we want to exercise. Having emotionally and mentally stimulated employees is a really good thing for the workplace."
  "People felt safe to share."
  "There’s so much to do every day—so much work to be done—it’s easy to start just coming and doing the work and leaving. This was a reminder that there’s more.”

Program Feedback
n=13

- 100% found Books@Work worthwhile
- 100% would recommend Books@Work to a friend
- 92% found themselves talking the Books@Work experience with those not in the program
- 90% would participate in Books@Work again
- 90% found that the stories and characters caused them to reflect on experiences in the workplace

Seminar Readings
Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver & Priscilla Warner, The Faith Club
Margaret Atwood, Oryx and Crake
Isabel Wilkerson, The Warmth of Other Suns

The Participants
Demographic Information
n=13 (3 skipped all demographic questions)

- Gender
  - Female: 7
  - Male: 3

- Race
  - White: 8
  - African-American: 2

- Age Ranges
  - 25-34: 2
  - 35-44: 1
  - 45-54: 4
  - 55-64: 2
  - 65+: 1

- Education Completed
  - Some college: 3
  - Associate's Degree: 1
  - Bachelor's Degree: 3
  - Some graduate: 1
  - Graduate/Professional Degree: 2

The diverse participants’ daily workplace roles included, among others:

- Telephone operator
- OR scheduler
- Nurse Practitioner
- HR Professional
- Medical Media
- Records Analyst
- Social Worker

That Can Be Me, Inc.
www.booksatwork.org