Perceptions of First Year Read Program Student Benefits

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If you could make everyone in the world read, what book would that be and why?

Session Agenda  
(this is forming by the moment)

• What is your level of familiarity with FYR?  
• What are you interested in talking/hearing about during this session?

Terminology

• "Common read"  
  ➢ Can be whole campus or city read  
• "First year read" = "freshman read"  
  ➢ Usually just for beginning students  
• Self-Authorship  
  ➢ The ability to hear and trust one's own internal voice that leads to success in life.

The Boise State Experience

• Have had four plus years of First Year Reads  
• President with varying levels of input of faculty and student services personnel work together on a committee has chosen the book  
• The committee then arranges programming around book  
  ➢ Classroom use  
  ➢ Speaker/author  
  ➢ Other events related to book

The Boise State Experience

• Freshman get a copy in the summer.  
• Some inclusion of book in fall course discussions (mainly Univ101).  
• Guest speaker is important to the annual experience.  
• Presented some students' experience in our campus research day this last year.
**More About Our Story**

- Previous books were:
  - *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson
  - *Deep Dark* by Greg Olsen
  - *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder
- This year was the first fiction book and female author:
  - *Run: A Novel* by Ann Patchett
- Students are nominating the book for next year.

**Theoretical Framework**

- Marcia Baxter-Magolda's work on self-authorship.
- Focuses on what it takes to develop self-authorship.
- How people can help others grow toward self-authorship.

**What Needs to Happen with SA?**

- Baxter-Magolda's work suggests that:
  - Students need some sort of painful or difficult experience to begin change process.
  - This provokes them to evaluate their beliefs.
  - Other people can help students develop.
  - These people are called "good partners."

  *(Baxter-Magolda, 2009)*

**Good Partners Support by:**

- Having respect for the thoughts and feelings of others.
- Helping partners express what is happening to them in order to grow from the experiences.
- Collaborating with others in analyzing their own issues to foster mutual learning.

  *(Baxter-Magolda, 2009)*

**Good Partners Challenge:**

- Help others realize the complexity of life and not to accept easy answers.
- The people they are working with to listen to their own voice.
- Be interdependent with others and work together towards solutions of problems.

  *(Baxter-Magolda, 2009)*

**Using Baxter-Magolda's Work:**

- We knew books are able to change student's lives dramatically.
- We decided to question our "good partners" to identify what and how this was happening.
Our Research Project

- Interested in what was the best book
- Reviewed the literature
- Developed research questions
- Created a survey
- Received IRB approval
- Administered it via online system (Zoomerang)
- Crunched numbers
- Analyzed the results
- Drew conclusions

What was the Sample Like?

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Years of Employment in HE

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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What are the Benefits?

- 72% thought students benefited from the FYR program.
- Benefits were both social and cognitive:
  - Improve reading skills
  - Building community
  - Enhancing caring
- Helped with student discussions of more difficult topics.

Best Books?

- Our study participants identified:
  - Those that dealt with:
    - Social justice,
    - World view issues, and
    - Ethics.
  - Best length:
    - 200-300 pages.
  - Thought students would be involved in the book choice.

More About Findings

- Most people felt the students learned from the experience.
- Those that didn’t feel it was worthwhile described inconsistency in the use of the book.
- Issues related to “buy in” to process on campus.
- This may have been because too few faculty were involved in committee.