

Perceptions of First Year Read Program Student Benefits

Sandra Nadelson
Nursing Faculty and Faculty in Residence
208-426-4679
sandranadelson@boisestate.edu

Kimber Shaw
Director of Advising and Academic Enhancement

Special thanks to: Louis Nadelson (College of Education) & Kim Leeder (Library Services)

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?

Role	Frequency	Percent
Faculty	25	56.8
Staff	12	27.3
Adjunct	4	9.1
Special lectured	2	4.5
Other	1	2.3
Total	44	100.0



Years of Employment in HE

Years of Employment in Higher Education	Frequency	Percent
0-5 years	19	43.2
6-10 years	10	22.7
11-20 years	11	25.0
over 20 years	4	9.1
Total	44	100.0



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.