Chapter 1: The Common Reading Experience as an Integrative Learning and Programming Experience

Sponsors: ACPA Commission for Student Involvement & ACPA Commission for Admissions, Orientation, and First Year Experience

Hosts: Sarah Hermsmeier, CSI Chair-Elect &

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Special Thanks: Grace Fama, CSI E-Series Coordinator, and CSI and AOFYE Leadership

Chapter 1: The Common Reading Experience as an Integrative Learning and Programming Experience

Announcement:

Chapter 2: Institutional Best Practices of the Common Reading Experience

Wednesday, May 7, 2014
at 12-1:30pm EST

https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7890286014063001601

Chapter 1: The Common Reading Experience as an Integrative Learning and Programming Experience

Presenters:

Dr. Catherine Andersen, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs at the University of Baltimore

Christy Metzger, Director of First Year Initiatives, and Dr. Katie Partin, Coordinator of First Year Initiatives at the University of Louisville

CSI e-series
educate. engage. empower.

ACPA
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Admissions,
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and First Year
Experience

Common Reading: What is it?

- Book chosen for all entering students (or a targeted group)
- Series of events to promote a common intellectual experience
- Faculty, staff & extended community participate

Common Reading: Why?

- Orients new students to critical thinking & college level writing
- Provides a springboard for community conversation
- Establishes academic expectations before arrival
- Establishes a culture of readers
- Connecting to peers and faculty
- Connects to institution's mission and First-Year Experience (or other) goals
- Serves a cohesive point of entry for transfer students (Andersen 2014)

(Laufgraben, 2006)

Why Common Reading?

- "A <u>common</u> reading may simulate, on a smaller scale, the advantages associated with a core curriculum by providing a "core" learning experience…" (Cuseo, FYE listserv 2004)

- Kuh (2005) stressed the importance of offering ways for students to spend time with each other. Peers are essential to student learning and motivation. (Laufgraben, 2006)

Why Common Reading?

- Involving students in both in and out of class activities can impact cognitive development, including critical thinking (Terenzini, et al., 1993)

Why Common Reading?

- Common reading supports two key theoretical principles of student retention and learning:

  - Active involvement (Astin, 1985)

  - Social integration (Tinto, 1975, 1993)

Characteristics of Common Reading Experiences (Laufgraben, 2006)

- Involve an assigned reading of one or more books or reading selections
- Are academically oriented
- Promote reading, critical thinking and discussion skills
- Focus on a theme generated from the selected work
- Bring students, faculty and staff together around a common intellectual activity
- Incorporate a range of activities around the selected work
- Have shared program leadership among academic and student

Assessment

- **What is Assessment?**

"Any effort to gather, analyze or interpret evidence to describe effectiveness"

(Upcraft & Schuh 1996)

- **Why Assess?**
  – Justify continuation of program and expense
  – Link goals to outcomes that measure student success

Characteristics of Effective Assessment (Swing, 2004)

- Focuses on what matters

- Focuses on something you can change

- Is built on goodwill of participants and stakeholders

- Is multidimensional

Characteristics of Effective Assessment
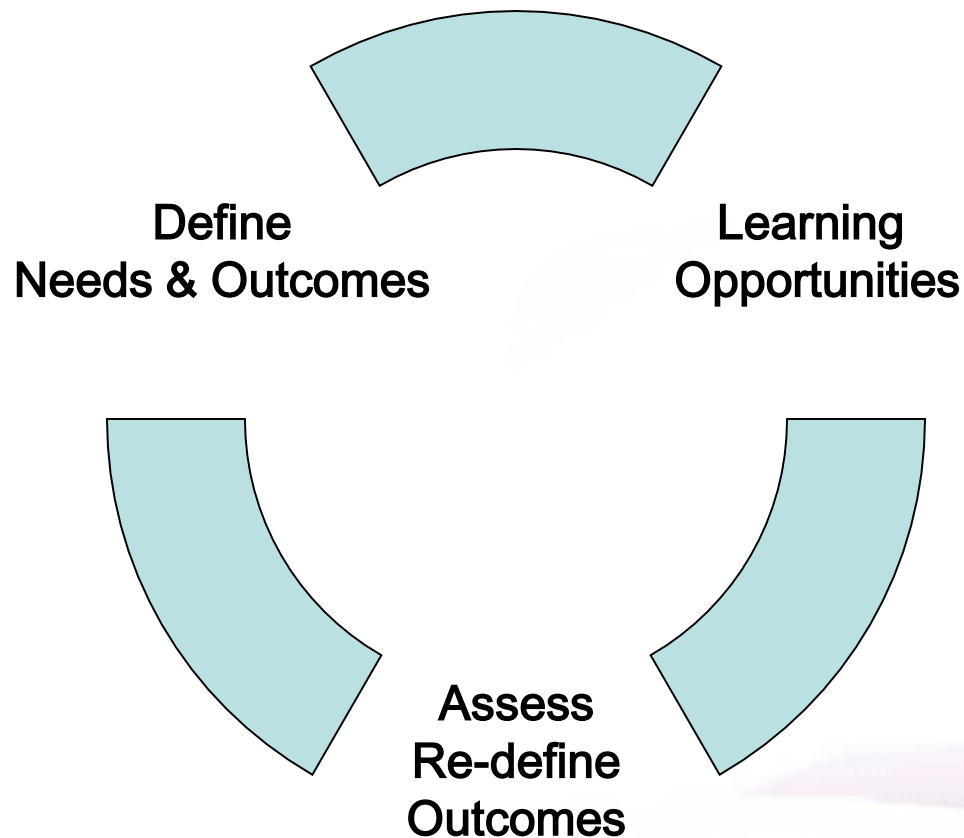(Swing, 2004)

- Includes input from stakeholders

- Places findings in appropriate context

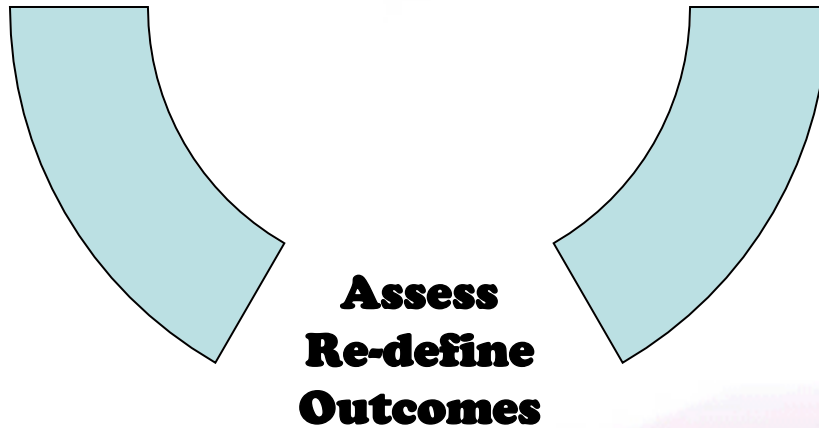- Produces comprehensible results
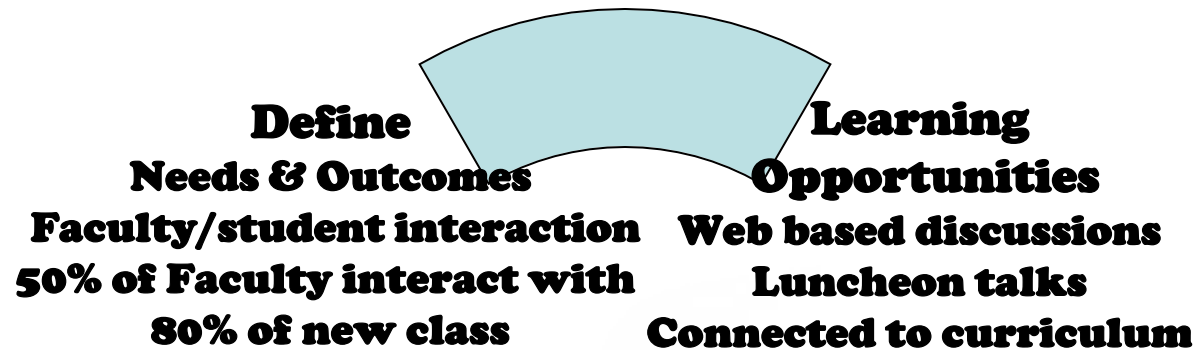
- Is disseminated and used

Assessment: Planned and Cyclical
(Adapted from Ward, 2002)

Cycle of Intentionality

Define
Needs & Outcomes

Learning
Opportunities

Assess
Re-define
Outcomes

Example:

Define
Needs & Outcomes
Faculty/student interaction
50% of Faculty interact with
80% of new class

Learning
Opportunities
Web based discussions
Luncheon talks
Connected to curriculum

Assess
Re-define
Outcomes

Different Types of Outcomes

1. Program Outcomes

2. Student Outcomes

3. Faculty-Staff or Institution Outcomes

4. Other Specific Outcomes

Program Outcomes

- Did all students know about the common reading program? How?
- How many students (faculty/staff) read the book?
- How was the book selected?
- Did this event increase awareness on the campus about FYE?
- Did students read the book before or after they arrived on campus?

Program Outcomes, Cont'd

- What books do students recommend for future common reading?

- Did students attend or participate in any events connected to the common reading (essay contest, book discussions, author's visit)?

- Which of the events were most popular?

- If they attended the author's visit, did they enjoy it? Why or why not?

Program Outcomes, Cont'd

- If they read the book after, what caused them to read the book?

- What did students like best/least about the book? Were faculty/staff opinions the same?

- Was the book used in other classes?

- Would students recommend a common reading program for next year's students?

Student Outcomes

- Did students see any benefit from reading the book? What were the benefits? Did it apply to their lives?
- Did reading the book encourage them to read more?
- Is there a relationship between common reading and higher GPA's?
- IS there a relationship between common reading and NSSE or YFCY scores?
- Did students who read the book want to know more about the theme?

Faculty-Staff-Institution Outcomes

- Did time with first-year students increase faculty – staff understanding of student needs?

- Did faculty student engagement scores for first-year students increase on the NSSE?

Other Specific Outcomes

- If families were encouraged to read the book were there higher levels of family involvement?

- Was there any connection between declaring a major or choice of major and the book content?

Other Specific Outcomes

- Was there any change in attitudes/behaviors about a theme that was emphasized in the book?

- Did students who participated in common reading do more service learning?

- If the book is connected to a university goal, did students who participated in common reading respond more favorably to such questions?

Sample Student Survey Results:

- I read <u>Tuesdays With Morrie</u>   92%
- I attended an event
  61%
- Summer reading is a good idea   76%
- Reading this book made me want to read more
  63%
- I want more events like <u>Tuesdays With Morrie</u>   50%

Results, Cont'd:

- After reading <u>Tuesdays With Morrie</u> , I
  - Appreciated life more 63%
  - Appreciated friends more 49%
  - Appreciate family more 49%
  - Appreciated teachers more 40%
  - Was more focused on academics 22%

More Results:

Selected student journals

- "My father had ALS… I never knew how he felt"
- "I am curious about last year's book, and what will you choose for next year?"
- "Do you think Mitch follows his own   message?"

Additional Assessment Ideas

(Andersen in Laufgraben, 2006)

- Bowling Green State University

- Objective:

- "To assess the effectiveness of using *Into the Forest* in generating class discussion, facilitating socialization, assisting students in making connections, and intellectual stimulation"

- How?

- A student survey

Honors Common Reading

- **Goals/Outcomes**
  - To introduce students to rigors of Honors work, the fall curriculum and interdisciplinary studies
  - To begin building the intellectual community
  - To explore issues of oppression, identity, race, poverty etc.
- **Activities (learning opportunities**
  - Required online discussion throughout summer – postings evaluated as part of admission to program
  - Author visits
  - public presentation
  - seminars with students
- **Assessment**
  - Begins with clear outcomes

Gallaudet University Honors Selections

- 2002: *Wicked* (identity & oppression)
- 2003: *Cod, Silent Spring* (environment)
- 2004: *Fast Food Nation (* the American diet)*, A Beautiful Mind (*identity)
- 2005: *The Road to Wellville* (the American diet)
- 2006: *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (*race & power)*, Rebuilt: My Journey Back to the Hearing World* (identity & deafness)

FYS Outcomes Addressed

- **Gain better understanding of self through reading …**
- *Journal entry where students discuss an event in the book they can identify.*
- **Communicate effectively in classroom situations …**
- *A class discussion in which everyone participates.*
- **Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills …**
- *Essays that connect themes in the book with a current social problem.*
- **Relate issues in the book to your life as a new college student**
- *Letter to next years college student.*

Cal Poly Assessment
(Andersen in Laufgraben, 2006)

- Survey students and facilitators at the end of the book discussion
- Examples:
  - How many students brought their books to the session
  - Did breakfast work well
  - Where was your meeting
  - Would you volunteer to lead next year
  - What suggestions do you have

Assessment

Quantitative	Qualitative
• Numbers and Percentages • Head Counts • Academic Progress	• Verbal descriptions and comments • Student/Faculty/staff Perceptions
(FYI, NSSE, CIRP, YFCY-homegrown)	*(First Year Prompt Project by Hodges and Yerian in FYE Monograph 37)*

Why NOT a Common Reading?

- Perhaps the most comprehensive critiques of these programs have come from the National Association of Scholars (NAS),which in 2010 and again in 2011 released reports castigating universities for choosing books that the association sees as too liberal, too focused on issues of race and ethnicity (and particularly on African Americans), too easy, too recent, too similar to one another and too far from the classics.

  - Inside Higher Ed 2012/01/11

Why NOT a Common Reading?

- Not faculty driven
- Taught in first-year seminar and writing classes by adjuncts – no flexibility
- Too costly
- Everyone wants a different book- university relations, campus life, faculty
- Often controversial

Why NOT a Common Reading?

- Purdue University abruptly cut over winter break to save $75,000

- "Let me put it this way: no one produced any evidence it was having great success," Daniels (Purdue President Daniels said. "The common reading program is really being replaced by things that we think will be more valuable to incoming students."

- Inside Higher Ed http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/03/26/after-abrupt-cut-purdue-faculty-call-restoration-common-reading-program#sthash.aoT8InHH.dpbs

Why NOT a Common Reading?

Two South Carolina Schools

"punished" for choice of books

- University of Charleston and University of South Carolina Upstate

If this book were a magazine it would be wrapped in brown paper," said Oran Smith, director of Palmetto Family Council to the Associated Press. "We reviewed every book assigned in SC this year. Many were provocative. This one is pornographic. Not a wise choice for 18-year-olds at a

taxpayer-supported college.

http://www.commdiginews.com/news-2/south-carolina-is-punishing-its-colleges-for-lgbt-books-9826/

Why Common Reading?

- But, such programs have value; less than a study of literature, they're a tool to boost students' critical thinking and social skills during the transition to campus (NAS).

- Inside Higher Ed 2012/01/11

Common Reading

- Can be a campus win for everyone but
  - Must tie to **shared** goals
  - Must be assessed
  - Must justify RIO
  - Must involve key stakeholders
  - Must share results
  - Must be willing to change

How do we go beyond the book to create an ongoing and engaging academic initiative for students?

Successful Programs…

- Facilitate student learning

- Build partnerships across campus

- Create sustained initiatives

- Embed the experience in campus culture

- Align program goals with curricular and co-curricular strategies

"By intentionally creating this relationship between the curricular and co-curricular components of the common reading program, the gap between students' in- and out-of-classroom learning is narrowed and learning is deepened."
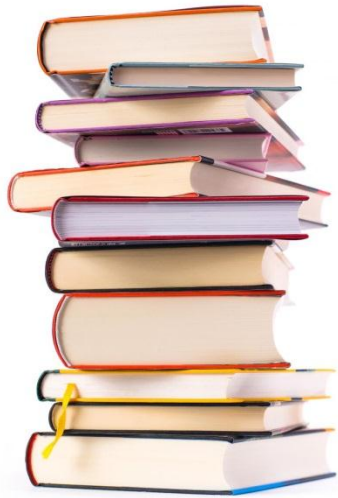
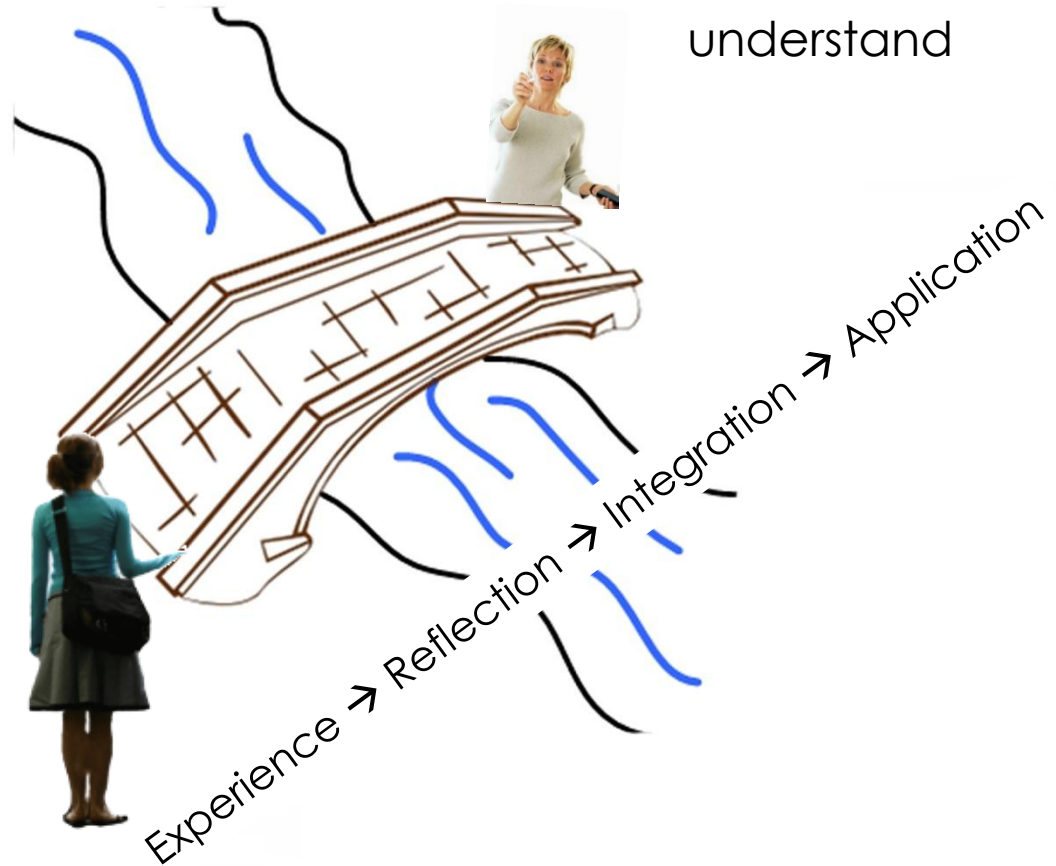(p. 73, Laufgraben, 2006)

Where Does Learning Happen?

Integrative Learning

Integrative Programming
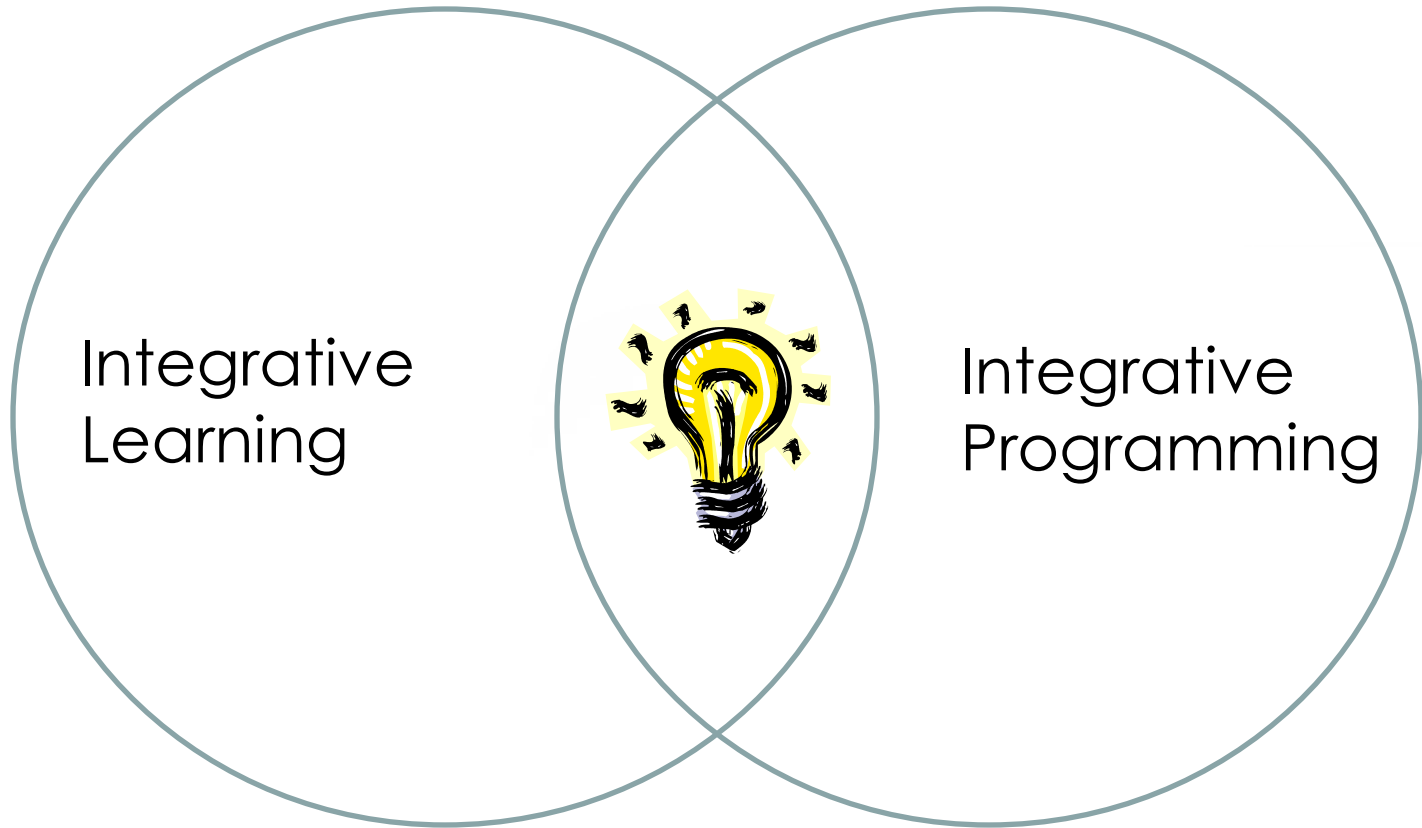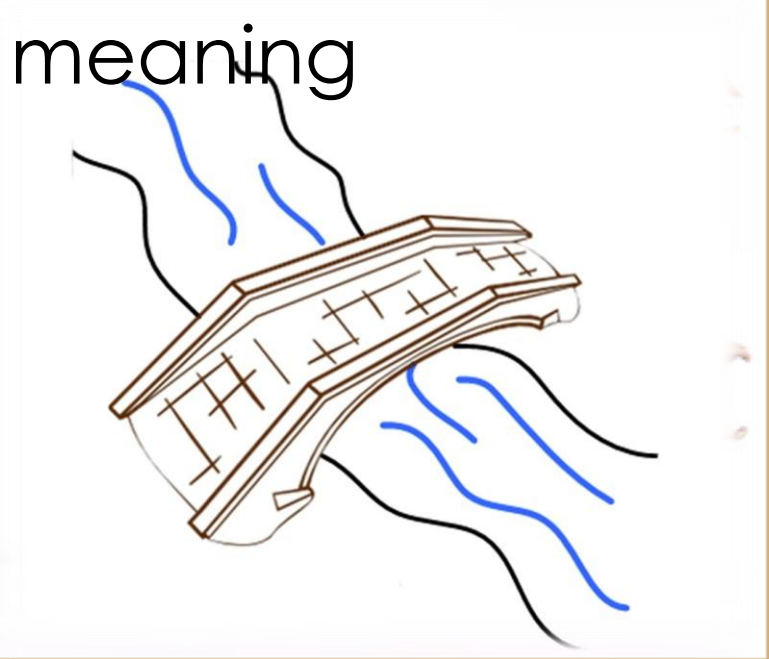
Where Do We Begin?

Kegan's Bridge Metaphor

Educators' goals for what and how students should understand

Experience → Reflection → Integration → Application

What students understand and how they understand it

3 Principles of Bridge Building

- Situate learning in the persons' experiences
- Validate them as knowers
- Mutually construct meaning

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Meet Them Where They Are

- Students

- Faculty

- Staff & Partner Offices

- Campus Environment/Culture

- Off-Campus Community

This information should drive book selection!

"Leaders and planners of common reading programs need to pay as much attention to <u>how</u> students become engaged around what they read, as they pay to <u>what</u> students read."

(p. 98, Laufgraben, 2006)

Cultivate Buy-In & Partnerships

- Align with larger institutional goals and initiatives

- Utilize the content and programming experts and enthusiasts you have on campus

Partner Workshops

- Generated BinC & text-specific buy-in

- Identified possible connections (people, events, etc.) we may have missed

- "Expert" perspective on themes educated us/others

- Encouraged partners to share in the work and contribute

- Early look at calendars

Partner Workshops

- First 45 minutes: generating buy-in
  - Intro to the common reading program
  - Intro to the chosen text
  - Plans in progress
- Second 45 minutes
  - Brainstorming themes
  - Identify partners/programs OR
  - Think-Pair-Share integration ideas
  - Compare calendars of events
  - Wrap up and next steps

Develop Mutually Beneficial Collaborations

Admissions * African American Male Initiative * Arts & Sciences Alumni Relations * Anne Braden Institute * Brown Fellows Program * Campus Health Promotion * Cardinal Covenant Scholars * Career Development Center * Commission on Diversity and Racial Equality * Community Foundation of Louisville * CONECT Mentors * Cultural Center * Engage.Lead.Serve Board * Housing & Residence Life * Ideas 2 Action (Quality Enhancement Plan) * Latin American and Latino Studies * Law School * LGBT Services * McConnell Center * Military and Veteran Student Services * PEACC * Political Science Department * Porter Scholars * REACH * Student Activities Board * Student Government Association * Student Involvement * Teach for America * Women & Gender Studies
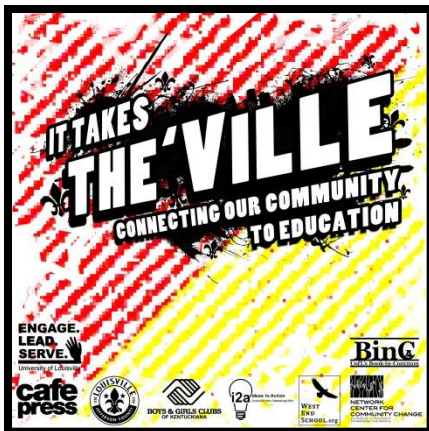
Types of Events & Activities

- Author's visit / book signing
- Discussion groups
- Lecture and film series
- Exhibits and theatrical performances
- Essay or creative contests
- Service opportunities
- Faculty Development/Resources

Author's Visit

- Combined author keynote with community engagement activity

Lecture Series

- Take Back the Night
- Pride Week Keynote: Janet Mock
- 50th Anniversary Celebration of March on Washington
- 80 Years Later: Leading the Eleanor Roosevelt Way
- Anne Braden Memorial Lecture
- ACES Black & Latino Student Success Symposium Keynote

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Resource Materials

- About the Common Reading Program
- Useful websites and social media
- Exploration of the text
  - Themes and topics
  - Questions and quotes by chapter
  - General discussion questions
- Integration strategies
  - Active learning
  - Digital media ideas
  - Writing exercises

"We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience."

- Dewey

1. Acknowledge success/challenge
2. Ask for help
3. Reframe deficits into opportunities
4. Make adjustments and try, try again

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Question & Answer Session

Use "Question" Feature in GoToWebinar Control Panel to Pose a Question

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Thank You for Participating!

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