

2017

## **We all read the same book: Assessing the Impact of the Common Reader**

Jamie Addy

*Georgia College and State University, [jamie.addy@gcsu.edu](mailto:jamie.addy@gcsu.edu)*

Jenny Harris

*Austin Peay State University, [harrisj@apsu.edu](mailto:harrisj@apsu.edu)*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://kb.gcsu.edu/lib>

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Addy, Jamie and Harris, Jenny, "We all read the same book: Assessing the Impact of the Common Reader" (2017). *Faculty Scholarship*. 7.  
<https://kb.gcsu.edu/lib/7>

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the Ina Dillard Russell Library at Knowledge Box. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Box.

## We All Read the Same Book: Assessing the Impact of the Common Reader

Jenny Harris, Education and Social Sciences Librarian, Austin Peay State University, [harrisj@apsu.edu](mailto:harrisj@apsu.edu); Jamie Addy, First-Year Librarian, Georgia College, [jame.addy@gcsu.edu](mailto:jame.addy@gcsu.edu)

### NUTRITION INFORMATION

While Georgia College has implemented a successful Common Reader program for many years, no formalized assessment has occurred. In Fall 2015, during the university's Week of Welcome, which takes place the week prior to the start of classes, all incoming students were encouraged to read *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore.

Russell Library decided to capture assessment data on the Common Reader experience by targeting students with undeclared majors and facilitating reading circles to measure their engagement with the text. This was the first time Russell Library formally participated in the program.

### NUMBERS SERVED

200 students (in groups of 20)

### COOKING TIME

45 minutes

### DIETARY GUIDELINES

This recipe can be used as a model for other Common Reader programs and as an example of how to leverage the library for university-wide outreach and assessment.

### ACRL FRAMEWORKS ADDRESSED

- Information Has Value
- Scholarship as Conversation

### MAIN COOKING TECHNIQUE

Small group discussion, reflection, and exit ticket assessment

### MAIN INGREDIENTS

- Common Reader text/book/activity
- Discussion questions/LibGuide
- Flip charts
- Exit ticket worksheet

### PREPARATION

- Prior to the Week of Welcome, encourage volunteers from the library to lead small group discussions focused on the Common Reader book.
- Identify group or individual facilitators and pre-divide all students with undeclared majors among the facilitators.
- Determine locations throughout the building to host small group discussions.
- Compile information on the Common Reader book, the author, and other relevant information, such as convocation activities into a resource guide (LibGuide).

- » Feature discussion questions and themes found in the text on the LibGuide.
- Disseminate the LibGuide to other campus stakeholders as a way to generate student discussion about the text. (A link to our LibGuide can be found here: <http://libguides.gcsu.edu/convocation>.)

### MAIN COOKING METHOD

1. Greet students as they arrive and separate into groups of 20 students (a librarian/library staff member pair works well).
2. Lead students to pre-determined discussion areas equipped with pencils, visual discussion aids (such as whiteboards or paper flip charts), and the exit ticket assessment.
3. Engage students in conversation about the text to encourage critical thinking skills.
4. Five minutes before the allotted time is up, provide students with the exit ticket worksheet to complete. Our ticket asked students the following questions:
  - » How much of *The Other Wes Moore* did you read?
  - » How would you rate this experience?

- » How has reading and discussing *The Other Wes Moore* impacted your personal development?
  - » Do you feel this activity is a good introduction to Georgia College? Why or why not?
5. Collect exit tickets as students leave the discussion group.

### ALLERGY WARNINGS

Students may not have read the book. This is a pitfall of any Common Reader program that is not fully integrated within the First-Year curriculum. Facilitators should pull out major themes from the book and have a list of questions prepared to guide the conversation.

### CHEF'S NOTE

Assessment of this activity was well received by university administration. While the discussion component has been in place for many years, a way to capture meaningful assessment has not previously been implemented. Going forward, the library will assess *all* students participating in the Common Reader program and provide input on how to better integrate the selected text throughout the first-year experience.