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Integrating Modern-Day Slavery into Interdisciplinary First-Year Seminars

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Integrating Modern-Day Slavery into Interdisciplinary First-Year Seminars

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One of the contributing causes of trafficking is its seeming invisibility, especially in the United States. Traditional-age college students arrive on campus having been taught a pervasive cultural myth throughout their years of education. That myth is that slavery was abolished in the United States in the 1800s. It is no longer a social issue demanding concern or attention. It can't happen here -- for a myriad of issues. Yet, conservative estimates point to at least 200,000 individuals being enslaved in the United States at any moment in time. Part of the role of the academy is to make these "invisible" problems visible, to spark critical thinking regarding complex social issues, and to engage the next generation of leaders in the exploration of both causes and possible solutions.

Our work with first-year college students suggests that they are not aware of modern-day slavery, yet they are quite ready to get engaged in the fight to eradicate it once they have the knowledge. We would like to discuss how to integrate the teaching of modern-day slavery into first-year seminar courses, a growing interdisciplinary curricular option on many campuses, and provide data illustrating its effectiveness at one institution.

This presentation will be both theoretical and highly practical, combining data analysis with dialogue about what worked on our own campus and what might work on other campuses. We will also provide participants with curricular materials to help them integrate modern-day slavery into their courses.

Integrating Modern-Day Slavery into Interdisciplinary First-year Seminars

Dr. Keisha Hoerrner
Dr. Ruth Goldfine



Common Perceptions of First-Year Students

- They don't read books.
- They aren't knowledgeable about current events.
- They are very cynical about politics and are not politically engaged.
- They have short attention spans.
- Many see college as a “ticket to a trade” rather than an opportunity to learn.

One Way to Address Perceptions

- First-Year Seminar course with a common reader component
 - Interdisciplinary course that provides a foundation for academic inquiry
 - Focus is on the skills, abilities, and knowledge base needed to be a successful college graduate – and a lifelong learner
 - Common reader promotes reading, critical thinking, and global awareness



Objectives

Students participating in the Common Reader Program will:

1. Gain reinforcement of the KSU 1101/1111 learning outcomes;
2. Engage in the reading and discussion of a book that challenges them to see the world from new perspectives;
3. Join their peers in a common academic experience;
4. Demonstrate knowledge of academic, political, social, and world issues;
5. Explore the development of their individual identities; and
6. Develop multicultural awareness.



Why Promote Reading?

- The National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) November 2007 research report, *To Read or Not to Read*, revealed that:
 - Americans are spending less time reading;
 - Reading comprehension skills are eroding; and
 - These declines have serious civic, social, cultural, and economic implications.

Why Promote Reading?

- The NEA data most relevant to college educators:
 - The number of 17-year-olds who read almost daily for fun dropped from 31% in 1984 to 22% in 2004; and
 - 65% of college freshman read for pleasure less than an hour per week or not at all.

Why Promote Reading?

- Employers rate more than a third (38%) of these graduates as deficient in this skill;
- 18- to 34-year olds, whose reading rates are the lowest for any adult age group under 65, show declines in cultural and civic participation;
- Literary readers are more than twice as likely as non-readers to volunteer or to do charity work;
- 84% of Proficient readers voted in the 2000 presidential election, compared with 53% of Below-Basic readers.

NEA's *To Read or Not to Read* (2007)



Why Promote Reading about Human Trafficking?

- An estimated 27 million men, women, and children are enslaved throughout the world
 - Even if we use the State Dept's estimate of 12.3 million, it is still as large as the 400 years of the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- Majority of college-age students are unaware human trafficking occurs in today's society
 - Cultural myth says slavery no longer exists – or at least exists only “over there”
- Reading about HT can educate and equip students to engage in the abolitionist movement

What We Did in 2007-08

- *Not for Sale* common reader for students in first-year seminar
- Author visit to campus
 - Public presentations
 - Classroom visits
- Quiz database
- Classroom activities
 - Group Discussions
 - Ethics Bowl
 - Writing Assignments
 - Theatrical Reactions
 - Journal Entries
- Studied Impact



Why It Was Successful

- Students were educated while also being inspired to get engaged
 - Free to Perform event for art students
- Not For Sale – GA was launched, using the campus as the foundation
- Campus initiatives tied in to common reader, allowing the impact to expand beyond first-year students and two days with Dave Batstone on campus

Research Questions

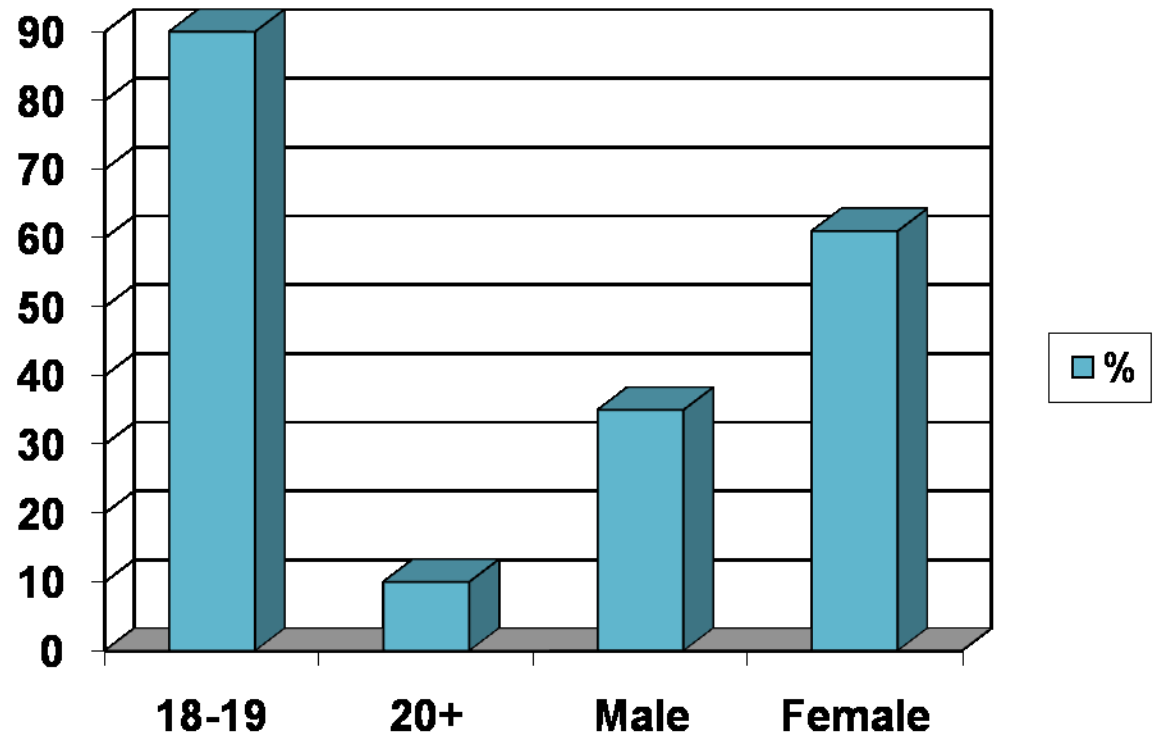
- (1) What impact does the common reader program have on students' attitudes toward reading?
- (2) What impact does the program have on the shared experiences of the common reader initiative?
- (3) What impact does the common reader program have on students' engagement in the issue of global slavery, the focus of this year's book selection?



Survey Methodology

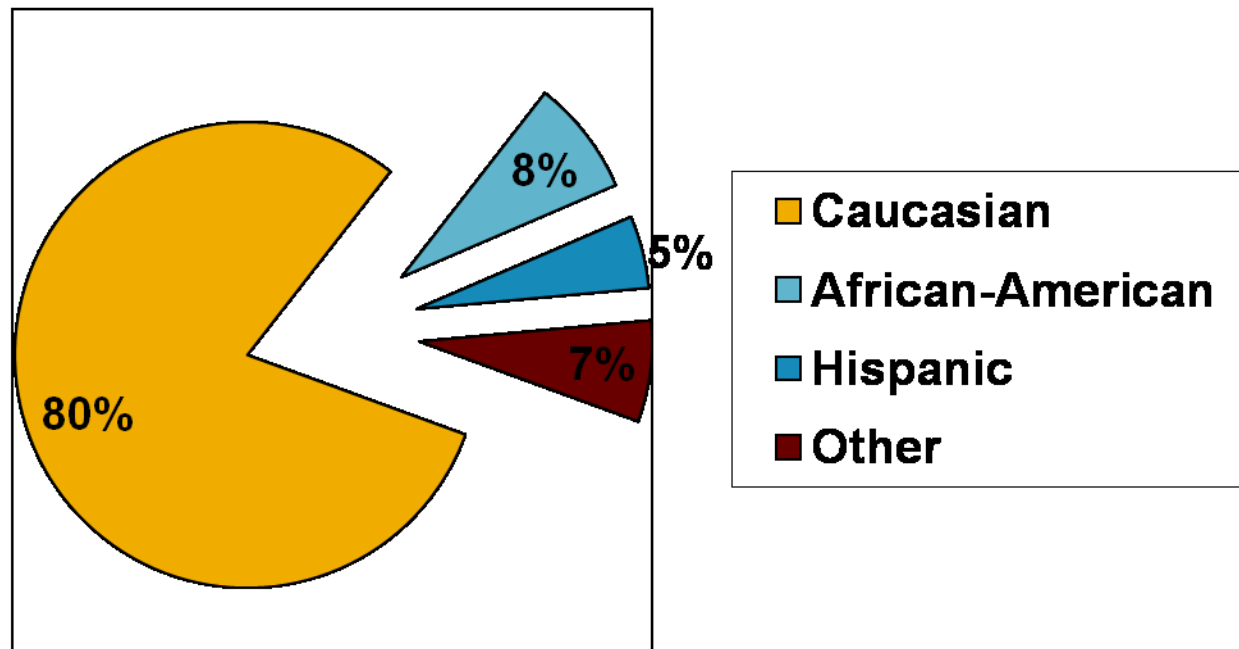
End-of-semester, moment-in-time instrument with 48 quantitative, 2 open-ended questions

- Self-report data



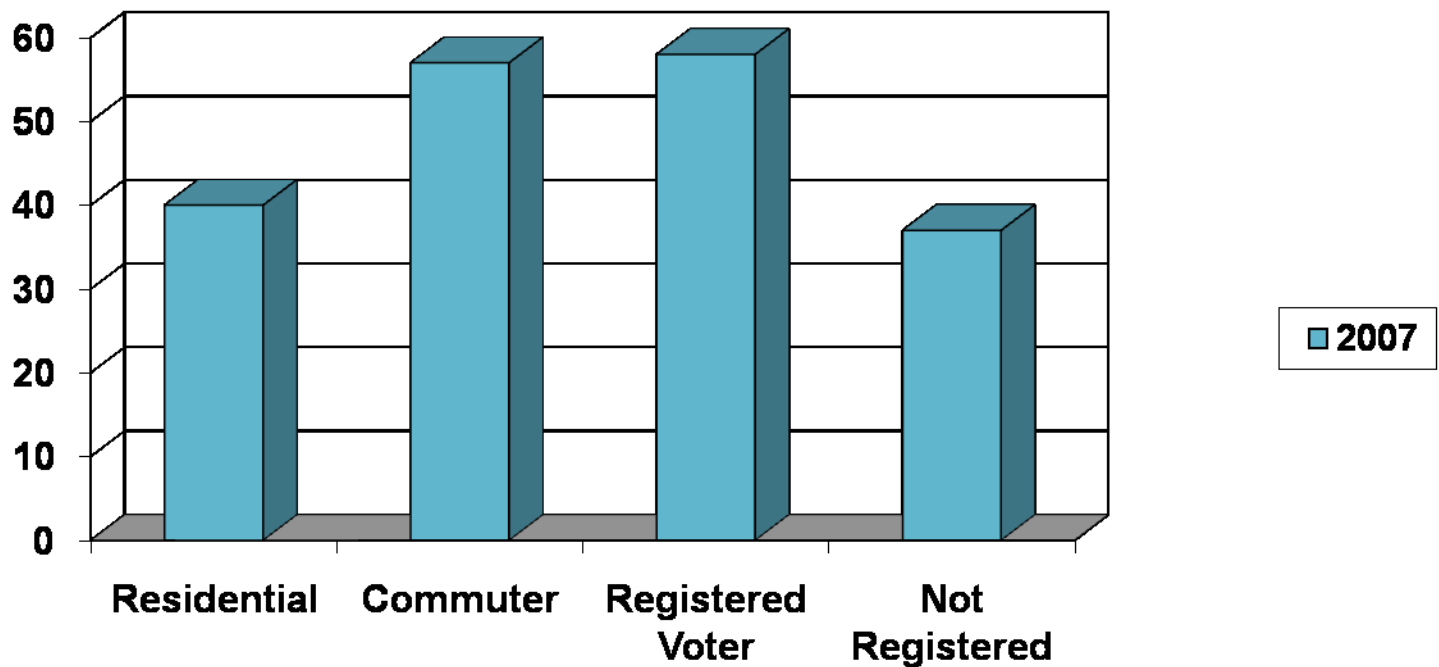
Survey Methodology

Demographics



Closely mirrors KSU student population; slightly lower African-American response pool

Survey Methodology



- 40% residential, 57% commuter;
- 58% were registered voters, 37% were not registered.

Results: Reading

- Almost half (48%) of respondents reported reading the full book; another 30% read “most” and 11% read “some”;
- More than 40% already read or plan to read more on human trafficking;
- 32% now look at reading as “enjoyable” and plan to do it more often;
- 47% see reading as a way to “gain more information about the world”; and
- Only 6% plan to avoid reading “at all costs.”

Results: Global Slavery

- One-fifth (20.5%, $n = 138$) believed slavery ended in the 1800s; more than half (51%, $n = 340$) thought slavery still occurred but “not on a large scale” before reading
- Three-fourths (76%, $n = 513$) after reading saw global slavery as “a larger problem today than it was in the 1800s, and it might be fought by individuals as well as governments and organizations”

Chi-Square Results

BEFORE AND AFTER: After reading *NFS* I know ... about global slavery:

BEFORE READING	A Lot	A Fair Amount	Some	A Little	Nothing	TOTAL
A Lot	13	4	2	1	1	21 (3.2%)
A Fair Amount	43	35	4	3	0	85 (12.8%)
Some	57	93	7	4	1	162 (24.4%)
A Little	95	137	30	2	0	264 (39.8%)
Nothing	44	72	11	4	1	132 (19.9%)
TOTAL	252 (38%)	341 (51.4%)	54 (8.1%)	14 (2.1%)	3 (.5%)	N = 664

$$\chi^2 = 38.085$$

$$df = 16$$

$$p = .001$$



Results: Engagement

- 4/5 agree there are actions “I can take to end human trafficking in the US”
 - Slightly smaller percentage agree regarding trafficking around the world
- Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ joined or plan to join a student organization with a global or political focus
- 39% had given money or planned to do so to a charity/NGO with a global or political focus

Results: Specific to *NFS*

Large majority thought it was a “reasonable length and easy to read”:

SA: 29%, n = 197 A: 54%, n = 360

Majority finished it voluntarily:

SA: 21%, n = 139 A: 32%, n = 212

Overwhelming intent to recommend to others,

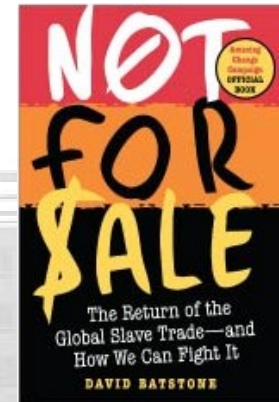
SA: 39% A: 47%

but smaller majority had actually recommended it:

SA: 25% A: 32%

Less than half could relate to a character:

SA: 5% A: 33%



Open-Ended Questions

- Two open-ended questions were included on the survey
 - Please describe the most important point you will take away from your reading of *Not for Sale* (#49)
 - Please describe what you are doing or will do, if anything, to fight global slavery (#50)
- Total number of responses
 - Question #49: 555
 - Question #50: 514

Most Common Answers

Question #49

55% (305) Slavery is currently a worldwide problem

23% (126) Individuals/I can and should make a difference in the fight to end modern-day slavery

Note: Some responses fall into more than one category.

Other Interesting Trends

Question #49

- 7% (39) Increased global awareness
- 5% (25) Most people are uninformed of the severity and extent of the modern-day slave trade
- 4% (20) Most U.S. college students lead a privileged and relatively easy life
- 2% (9) Many government officials (U.S. and abroad) are either corrupt or doing too little to help end the slave trade.

Sample of Student Responses

Question #49

- Before reading this book I was unaware of the huge slave and human trafficking business. I know now that even our country is full of slavery.
- Luxury and comfort in America costs the lives of others.
- I can change the world.
- More global leaders need to get involved.
- Little by little we can ultimately change the world.

More Student Responses

Question #49

- I need to make government officials and others aware of this issue.
- There is always something you can do to change the world.
- I have realized how easy my life is compared to many people.
- Slavery still exists today and is being treated as an invisible problem.
- Citizens buying things such as socks, shoes, car parts, etc. supply the demand for slaves.

More Student Responses

Question #49

- Americans are generally unaware of global issues outside of the U.S. The media is not doing enough to inform Americans.
- I can help.
- The world is so much bigger than my daily experience, and there are causes that beg me to fight for them.
- Global action begins with me and is my responsibility. If we want the world to change we need to stop blaming the government and take personal, positive action.
- A lot of people have much bigger problems than I do and it made me appreciate my life and the things I have so much more.
- How can I feel content with all the horrors other cultures feel?

More Student Responses

Question #49

- I realized that there are far more important issues in the world than the petty problems I deal with every day.
- *Not for Sale* served as a reminder that there are people in the world who are just like me but due to uncontrollable circumstances are far less privileged. This semester has motivated me to do more to even this imbalance.
- Just because something isn't right under your nose doesn't mean it isn't happening.
- I should appreciate what I have.
- I like [that *Not for Sale*] gets people to think beyond their backyard and new car.

The Four Most Common Answers

Question #50

Please describe what you are doing or will do, if anything, to fight global slavery:

22% (113)	Join an organization, volunteer, work for the cause
21% (109)	Raise awareness
21% (107)	Donate money
17% (87)	Nothing

Other Answers

Question #50

8% (43)

Not sure

6% (32)

Learn more

6% (29)

Raise money

4% (22)

Use political channels

3% (17)

Be more aware

2% (8)

Pray

1% (6)

Avoid products made by slaves

.4% (2)

Fight slavery in the Army

Other Interesting Trends

Question #50

- 9% (46) reported actually doing something;
- 6% (29) are ready to travel to work for this cause or another international humanitarian effort;
- 4% (19) tied the issue to their religious beliefs;
- 1% (7) envision future career related to the issue; and
- .4% (2) used Facebook to raise awareness.

Sample Student Response

Question #50

- I can spread awareness, recommend *Not for Sale* to others, raise and donate money and do other things to help fight the modern day slave trade.

These things are steps that I have or am going to take. I have become quite the activist since reading *Not for Sale*.

As well as wanting to end global slavery, I have become passionate about many other global issues.



More Student Responses

Question #50

- I want to help in the KSU group to research slavery, join Schools for Schools, stay involved and knowledgeable about what's going on in Uganda, continue to pray for people and volunteer any chance I get.
- To fight global slavery I will do almost anything. I have contributed money to Invisible Children and plan on contributing more as time passes.
- If given the opportunity I would also love to visit some of the amazing countries and help out first-hand.



More Student Responses

Question #50

- I plan to join a student organization dedicated to fighting slavery and pursue a career in the abolitionist movement once I graduate.
- I hope to involve myself in an organization to fight global slavery after college.
- I am telling all of my friends at other schools to read *Not for Sale* and am encouraging others to get involved. I myself am getting involved with Invisible Children.

More Student Responses

Question #50

- I am majoring in Human Services so I can go to such countries and work within my country and spread love and make the issue known.
- After graduating, I am considering going to Africa for a year to be a teacher for an organization with children in need or Shangilia.
- I would like to intern/volunteer in Latin America or locally over the summer to learn how NGO's work then work in one after college.

Results: Bottom Line

- “*Not for Sale* was a valuable part of my first-year experience at KSU”:
 - SA: 25%, $n = 167$
 - A: 48%, $n = 320$
 - D: 19%, $n = 125$
 - SD: 8%, $n = 52$
- 88% (SA: 42%, A: 46%) agreed it “helped me explore global issues I might not have otherwise thought about.”

Results: Bottom Line

- "The Common Reader Program caused me to view myself and my ability to make positive changes in the world differently."
 - SA: 17%, n = 111
 - A: 53%, n = 354
- They are finding their voices!

Final Thoughts on 2007-08

- Our common reader:
 - Enhanced KSU's QEP – “Global Learning for an Engaged Citizenship”;
 - Promoted both classroom and out-of-class connections;
 - Stimulated civic engagement initiatives; and
 - Reminded us all of the power of printed text in an increasingly digital world.



Replication on Other Campuses

- Not For Sale Campaign now offers the Backyard Abolitionist Tour, a multimedia event that will come to campus
- Book Options: *Ending Slavery* by Kevin Bales; *The Slave Next Door* by Kevin Bales and Ron Soodalter; or *A Crime So Montrous* by Ben Skinner
- Collaborate with local anti-slavery orgs

Resources

- Instructor's Manual for *Not For Sale*
- Videos
 - “Dreams Die Hard” [available through Free the Slaves]
 - Christian-focus: “Amazing Grace” and new documentary from International Justice Mission
- “SOLD” Documentary
- Websites
- U.S. State Department's annual *Trafficking in Persons* report

Contact Us!

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