

KEKER FIRST YEAR COMMON READ LUNCHEON
26 APRIL 2017 ♦ VIRGINIA DARE ROOM

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* coalesces around three main themes: poverty, hope, and culture clashes. Each topic presents unique challenges or potential areas of resistance from our students; each topic also presents unique opportunities for instructors to encourage students to think positively and creatively about how they might engage with these ideas inside and outside of the classroom, perhaps even answering the question, “now what?” In the spaces below, please take some notes on what challenges you are anticipating and what opportunities you might craft for your students as you address the theme of **Hope**.

CHALLENGES:

- Getting students to thinking individually and critically about the significance of hope.
- Hope is difficult to define and is different for everyone.
- It can be difficult to get students to imagine a future they never thought about themselves.
- Some students have a hard time distinguishing their own hopes and dreams from the hopes and dreams initiated by their parents.
- It can be a challenge to help students draw connections between hope and action.
- When thinking about society, some students might be pessimistic about hope.
- Social media can negatively impact student’s expectations for their own successes and failures.
- Must intentionally disconnect the word hope from religious contexts.
- The current political climate might make it difficult to talk about hope.
- We must be inclusive in our language and understanding of hope...b/c students are coming to college with different backgrounds and experiences, so their individual ideas about hope may be different than what is expressed in the book.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Hope is different for every individual and can be explored in so many ways
- The Bronze Leadership Challenge workshop on visioning and goal-setting can be beneficial
- Encourage students to think about how they want to make a difference in the world
- Hope can serve as a motivator to help students overcome obstacles
- Help students draw connections between their own hopes as they transition to UNCG and beyond

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CHALLENGES:

- Students may not understand their own culture.
- A lot of students have not been exposed to cultures other than their own.
- Some students may not understand what culture is and how it applies to them.
- There is a need to interrogate the author’s perspective and representation of the Annawadi people given her the differences between their cultural backgrounds.
- Potential for conflict to occur in the classroom when we start to engage in dialogue about culture that goes beneath the surface level.
- It can be challenging to create space for students to share their thoughts and ideas without feeling attacked or belittled.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Talk about the power of words “slum,” “ghetto,” “clash,” and explore opportunities to re-educate or reclaim negative words.
- Making connections between India’s culture and Greensboro, UNCG, and the United States
- Fully defining culture from the lens of both privilege and oppression
- Encourage all to respect other people’s opinions and culture
- Create opportunities to informally and formally share and celebrate all cultures
- Use the text to create formal and informal opportunities for students to engage in critical dialogue to develop their communication and critical thinking skills
- Encourage students to ask questions in a respectful way

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CHALLENGES:

- Might need to reframe how poverty is discussed - look at it as a system vs. an experience.
- It can be difficult to define the cycle of poverty and distinguish between short-term and long-term poverty
- Some people blame the individuals for the socio-economic inequality from which they suffer.
- We need to talk about poverty as it is, not as it was. The circumstances of poverty have changed.
- People have different ideas about how people get in and out of poverty

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Create opportunities for students to explore and share their knowledge about world poverty
- Help students understand how their own privilege influences their conceptualization of poverty
- Examine the root of poverty and evaluate the discriminatory economic, political, and social forces at play
- Create opportunities for students to explore and or initiate action to help address food insecurity or other social issues
- Explore the connection between gender, race, education, unemployment and poverty
- Discuss methods of breaking the poverty cycle
- Encourage students to reflect on their own biases related to socio-economic status
- Impress upon the students that outward appearance and material wealth are not legitimate indicators or qualities related to inward character
- Create opportunities for students to gain financial knowledge to prepare for their future