Living and Learning Together: Results from the 2004 National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP)

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Indiana University
Defining Living-Learning Programs for the NSLLP

- Living-Learning Program Definition:
  - Program involves undergraduate students who live together in a discrete portion of a residence hall (or the entire hall)
  - Program has staff and resources dedicated for that program only, and not for the entire residence hall
  - Participants in the program partake in special academic and/or extra-curricular programming designed especially for them.
Living-Learning Programs as the “Miracle Cure”

• Living-learning programs created to fill tall order of improving undergraduate education

• The “ultimate learning experience”
  ✓ Can help students make a successful transition to college
  ✓ Can improve student learning and development
  ✓ Can facilitate better academic achievement and retention

• Yet, what do we really know about L/L programs?
A Quick Quiz:
Variety among Living-Learning Programs

- How many different types of L/L programs (e.g., Honors, Residential Colleges, etc.) exist on campuses across the United States?
- How many L/L programs offer courses for credit as part of their programming?
- What proportion of L/L programs require their students to participate in some kind of co-curricular activity?
A Quick Quiz: Living-Learning Environments & Outcomes

• Are L/L students more likely than non-L/L students to:
  
  – Enjoy a smooth transition to college? *(True/False)*
  
  – Use critical thinking skills? *(T/F)*
  
  – Have higher self-confidence? *(T/F)*
  
  – Have a stronger appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity? *(T/F)*
Quiz answers coming up later!
Background of the Study

• Other national projects have studied *learning communities*, but none have focused specifically on living-learning programs.

• Assessments of living-learning programs have yielded positive but disconnected and idiosyncratic results.
  - ✓ Most L/L assessment has been confined to single-program studies on individual campuses.

• New research is needed that identifies common outcomes across different types of programs and institutions.
NSLLP Collaborators

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Kristen Vogt
Jennifer Weisman
Introduction to the National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP)

• A four-year funded project by the Association of College & University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I)

• 2004 data collection included:
  ✓ 34 universities
  ✓ 274 living-learning programs
  ✓ Approximately 24,000 student respondents
2004 NSLLP Participating Schools

- Arizona State University
- Bowling Green State University
- Central Washington University
- Clemson University
- Colorado State University
- Florida State University
- George Washington University
- Indiana University
- Louisiana State University
- North Carolina State
- Northeastern University
- Northern Illinois University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Purdue University
- San Jose State University
- Southern Illinois University
- Syracuse University
- University of California - Irvine
- University of Central Arkansas
- University of Florida
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Michigan
- University of Missouri
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of North Carolina at Wilmington
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Richmond
- University of South Carolina
- University of Tennessee - Knoxville
- University of Vermont
- University of Wisconsin
- Western Kentucky University
NSLLP Timeline

• Phase 1 (2001-02)
  ✓ Comprehensive literature review
  ✓ Annotated bibliography (available on website)

• Phase 2 (2002-03)
  ✓ Conducted pilot study at 4 universities

• Phase 3 (2003-04)
  ✓ Survey administration at 34 participating institutions
  ✓ Data analysis and custom report generation

• Phase 4 (2004-05)
  • Report of overall findings
  • Publications from 2004 data
  • Facilitate campus dialogues
NSLLP Conceptual Framework
(Astin, 1993; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003)

**INPUTS**
- Demographics
- High school achievement
- Pre-college assessment of importance of involvement and perceptions of self-confidence

**ENVIORNMENTS**
- Peer interactions
- Faculty interactions
- Co-curricular involvement
- Alcohol related experiences
- Residence hall resources use
- Residence hall climate perceptions
- Diverse interactions
- Campus racial climate perceptions
- Time spent doing leisure activities

**OUTCOMES**
- Academic and social transition to college
- Intellectual abilities
- Intellectual growth
- Perceptions of self-confidence
- Diversity appreciation
- Sense of civic engagement
- Alcohol use/behaviors
- Plans to return to institution
- Cumulative college grades
- Living-learning and overall satisfaction
NSLLP Data Collection Protocol

• Each participating school selected random samples among:
  ✓ All of its living-learning participants
  ✓ Comparison sample living in residence hall

• Web-based survey administered January - March 2004

• Each participating school’s primary contact also asked to fill out an informational survey about L/L program components and structures
  ✓ Ex: Number of faculty with direct role in L/L program
  ✓ Ex: Is L/L program selective?
NSLLP Student Survey
Final Sample

Living-Learning Sample: 11,669
(35% response rate)

Comparison Sample: 12,241
(30% response rate)

TOTAL: 23,910
(32% overall response rate)
2004 NSLLP Findings

Characteristics of L/L programs or LLPs
Characteristics of LLPs: Organizational traits

- 48% of LLPs have 50 or fewer students
- 66% of LLP students live in a reserved portion of a residence hall, with other non-LLP students
  - 31% of LLPs are in residence halls in prime location on campus
- 54% are selective
- 31% are funded solely by Student Affairs unit, 14% solely by Academic Affairs unit, 39% a mix of both
- 68% directly report to Residence Life/Housing unit
Characteristics of LLPs: Academic activities

✅ 73% of LLPs offer no courses for credit

✅ 78% offer no special sections of large introductory courses

✅ 51% have 1-5 faculty members with direct roles in LLPs
   ✗ 33% have no faculty involvement

✅ 25% offer academic advising

✅ 50% facilitate study groups
Characteristics of LLPs: Co-curricular activities

✓ 50% of LLPs have **no** required co-curricular activities

✓ Among optional co-curricular programming, percentage of LLPs offering:
  - Team building activities: 50%
  - Cultural outings: 50%
  - Multicultural programming: 48%
  - Community service: 46%
  - Career workshops: 40%
  - Intramural sports: 33%
2004 NSLLP Findings

Two Living-Learning Typologies
Theme-Based Typology

- LLPs sorted into categories based on descriptions of foci, goals, and objectives of programs provided by institutions

- Of the 274 different LLPs in the NSLLL, 247 were categorized into similar themes

- There are 14 primary categories
  - The total of primary and sub-categories equals 26
Theme-Based Typology
14 Primary Categories

- Civic/Social Leadership (21)
- Cultural (32)
- Disciplinary (67)
- Fine & Creative Arts (22)
- General Academic (7)
- Honors (22)
- Multi-Disciplinary (4)
- Outdoor Recreation (2)
- Research (2)
- Residential College (7)
- Transition (30)
- Upper-Division (4)
- Wellness/Healthy Living (9)
- Women’s (18)
Computer-Generated Typology

- SPSS “cluster analysis” used to group LLPs into clusters based on program characteristics
- Of the 274 different LLPs in the NSLLP, 169 were categorized into 3 clusters
- The 3 clusters are:
  - Small Academic Affairs-Based Programs
  - Small Student Affairs-Based Programs
  - Large Mixed Student/Academic Affairs Programs
Computer-Generated Typology
3 LLP Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Small AA Program</th>
<th>Small SA Program</th>
<th>Large SA/AA Mix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average # of students</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLP Director home base</td>
<td>Either Acad Dept or Acad Admin</td>
<td>Majority Res Life</td>
<td>Res Life, Acad Dept or Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary budget source</td>
<td>Mix of Student &amp; Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Primarily Student Affairs</td>
<td>Mix of Student &amp; Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># faculty working with LLP</td>
<td>67% have 1-5 faculty</td>
<td>44% have no faculty</td>
<td>75% have 1-5 faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer classes in residence hall</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer community service opps</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4living
Learning

2004 NSLLP Findings

Results from the Student Survey
All L/L vs. Non-L/L Students: Background Characteristics

- Majority of L/L participants in the study are women and are first-year or sophomore students

- Racial/ethnic representation ranges by program
  - ~80% White: Eng/Computer Sci. and Honors
  - ~60+% White: Multicultural and Humanities

- Parental education and income more heterogeneous than assumed, but generally higher for L/L students

- High school GPA is almost all As and Bs

- SAT scores range by program type, but generally higher for L/L students
## All L/L vs. Non-L/L Students: College Environments & Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Mean Scores</th>
<th>L/L</th>
<th>Non-L/L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer academic &amp; social discussions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty mentoring relationship</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty interaction w/ courses</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence hall climate academically &amp; socially supportive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan on following in future:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practicum/internship</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Study abroad</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research w/ professor</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senior capstone/thesis</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# All L/L vs. Non-L/L Students: Student Outcomes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth transition to college</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking abilities</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to civic engagement</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low levels of binge drinking</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in cognitive complexity, liberal learning, personal philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher academic self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### L/L Students in Theme-Based Typology: Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer academic &amp; social/cultural discussions</th>
<th>Highest Means</th>
<th>Lowest Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>• Civic Engagement</td>
<td>• Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>• Humanities</td>
<td>• Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty interaction &amp; mentorship</th>
<th>Highest Means</th>
<th>Lowest Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>• Foreign Language</td>
<td>• Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Division</td>
<td>• Upper-Division</td>
<td>• Eng &amp; Computer Sci</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive residence hall climate</th>
<th>Highest Means</th>
<th>Lowest Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential College</td>
<td>• Residential College</td>
<td>• Multicultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Sci/Eng</td>
<td>• Women in Sci/Eng</td>
<td>• Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use residence hall resources</th>
<th>Highest Means</th>
<th>Lowest Means</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>• Health Sciences</td>
<td>• Career Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>• Education</td>
<td>• Foreign Language</td>
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L/L Students in Theme-Based Typology: Outcomes

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Honors</td>
<td>• Health Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity appreciation</td>
<td>• Upper-Division</td>
<td>• Women in Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Civic Engagement</td>
<td>• General Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to civic engagement</td>
<td>• Education</td>
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<td>• Civic Engagement</td>
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L/L Students in Computer-Generated Typology: Environments & Outcomes

• Students in Large Mixed Student & Academic Affairs Programs were more likely to:
  ✓ Interact with faculty
  ✓ Find their residence hall climate to be supportive

• Students in Small Student Affairs Programs were more likely to:
  ✓ Report a higher appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity
  ✓ Binge drink at lower levels
2004 NSLLP Findings: 
Implications for Research & Practice

Differences in characteristics of L/L programs:

• Most L/L programs appear to be light on academic content, and many are also light on co-curricular activities

• Degree of variation among themes, goals, and objectives of L/L programs
  ✓ 26 different types of L/L program groupings found

• Appears to be consistency among ways in which L/L programs are organized and administered
  ✓ Computer-generated analysis was able to cluster a large number of L/L programs into 3 groupings
2004 NSLLP Findings: Implications for Research & Practice

Differences among L/L vs. non-L/L students:

• Preliminary data reveal that some facets of LLPs are working effectively:
  – Positive peer interaction & residence hall climate
  – Smoother transition to college
  – Higher civic engagement, lower binge drinking

• However, no significant differences among L/L and non-L/L students where differences were expected:
  – Cognitive development
  – Self-confidence
  – Appreciation of racial/ethnic diversity
2004 NSLLP Findings: Implications for Research & Practice

Differences among types of L/L programs

• In some ways, student environments and outcomes matched with program objectives and characteristics
  – Ex: Civic engagement program students had highest means in commitment to civic engagement
  – Ex: Students in large mixed student/academic affairs programs more likely to interact with faculty

• In some ways, environments and outcomes did not match
  – Ex: Multicultural program students did not have the highest means in racial/ethnic diversity appreciation
  – Ex: Students in L/L programs with greater course content did not express higher critical thinking abilities
NSLLP Next Steps

- Continue data analysis
  - Next, continue to refine two typologies of L/L programs
  - Also which LLP components predict persistence, achievement, other learning outcomes?

- Conduct longitudinal analysis on 2004 sample

- Select 3-5 campuses for “best practices” site visits

- Conduct new data collection for new participating schools
Other Sources of Information Related to the NSLLP

- Our website: [www.livelearnstudy.net](http://www.livelearnstudy.net) (including our annotated bibliography)

- Published journal articles and conference presentations