ENABLING DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING OF LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

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Twin goals of my remarks

- **Living-Learning Research**
  - You will leave with some inspiration on how to design research and assessment of living-learning programs for your own institutions and programs.

- **Living-Learning Practice**
  - You can continue to grow and develop your living-learning programs based on an empirically-derived best practices model.
Session outline

• What are living-learning programs?

• Introduction to the National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP)
  ✓ Conceptual framework
  ✓ Research design
  ✓ Using NSLLP methodologies for your own LLP assessments

• Summary of selected NSLLP results

• Best practices model for living-learning programs, based on the NSLLP findings
What are living-learning programs?

• *An old axiom:* Everything important that I learned in college I did not learn in a classroom.

• Obviously, students *do learn* in their classes, but they also learn a great deal outside of the classroom
  • Interacting with their peers
  • Participating in co-curricular activities
  • Working
  • Etc.

• What if….  
  • We could harness the powerful influences of students’ learning *and* living spaces and integrate them more seamlessly?  
  • Think of the experience we could provide our students
What do living-learning programs look like?
Well-known depictions of living-learning programs

Hogwarts (from the *Harry Potter* books)

- 4 houses (Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, Slytherin)
  - Houses have friendly competition
- All students assigned (or “sorted”) to one house based on personal characteristics
- Each house as a head master or mistress
Oxford University Colleges (UK)

- 38 self-governing Colleges
  - All teaching staff and students belong to one
- Tutorials still held in colleges
- Typical colleges include dining hall, chapel, library, bar, and common rooms
- First colleges established in 1200s
# NUS residential colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Town Residential Program</td>
<td>Tembusu College</td>
<td>Junior/Senior integrative experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Town Residential Program</td>
<td>College of Alice &amp; Peter Tan</td>
<td>Junior/Senior integrative experiences</td>
</tr>
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<td>University Scholars Program</td>
<td>Cinnamon College</td>
<td>Honors interdisciplinary program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yale-NUS College</td>
<td>Residential College 4</td>
<td>Classic residential college design; 4-year degree option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridge View Residential College</td>
<td>Ridge View Residences</td>
<td>1-year experience for 1st year students focused on improving skills and confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Defining living-learning programs

• 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
AAC&U high-impact practices

- First-Year Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities → Living-Learning Programs (including Residential Colleges)
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning Initiatives
- Internships
- Capstone Courses/Projects

From: http://www.aacu.org/LEAP/hip.cfm
Typology of LCs, LLPs, and RCs

Learning Communities
- Linked courses
- Team-taught courses
- Freshman interest groups
- Living-learning programs

Living- Learning Programs
- Honors LLPs
- Cultural LLPs
- Residential Colleges
- Discipline-based LLPs
- Etc…
Living-learning programs as the “miracle cure” in the U.S.

• A reaction to criticism that U.S. undergraduate education is lacking in quality

• By integrating the in- and out-of-class experience, LLPs are purported to be 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

• And, they are a high-impact practice!
Living-learning programs as the “miracle cure”

• But are LLPs the miracle cure?

• Prior to the 1990s/2000s, there was surprisingly little research on the effectiveness of LLPs
The National Study of Living-Learning Programs
Study Staff

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Tina Mainieri
Sara Showen
Funding sources
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
The I-E-O model  

(Astin, 1993)
## NSLLP Conceptual Framework (I-E-O)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Environments</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Demographics</td>
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<td>• Gender</td>
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<td>• Race/ethnicity</td>
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<td>• Socio-economic status</td>
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<td>• Religious affiliation</td>
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<td>• Citizenship</td>
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<td>• Etc.</td>
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<td>• HS achievement</td>
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<td>• HS grades</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Standardized test scores</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pre-tests of outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Academic major</td>
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<td>• Peer interactions</td>
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<td>• Faculty interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Co-curricular involvement</td>
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<td>• Study group interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alcohol-related experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use of residence hall resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Perceptions of residence hall climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Diverse interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• STEM related questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• LLP involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Transition to college</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Perceptions of intellectual abilities and growth</td>
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<td>• Self-confidence</td>
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<td>• Appreciation of diversity</td>
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<td>• Sense of civic engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alcohol use and behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Persistence/drop-out risk</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• College GPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Overall satisfaction and sense of belonging</td>
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</table>
Living-learning programs survey

- General information (e.g., size, goals & objectives)
- Reporting structure
- Budget/fiscal resources
- Academic coursework
- Faculty and staff roles
- Activities and resources
- Additional STEM-related questions
RESEARCH DESIGN
NSLLP study timeline

2003 Pilot Study
- Four campuses
- 5,437 students
- Tested reliability & validity of survey instrument and data collection methods

2004 NSLLP
- 34 institutions
- 23,910 students
- 297 L/L programs
- T₁ data collection
- Surveyed students & programs

2007 NSLLP
- 46 institutions
- T₂ follow-up (n=1,509)
- New baseline (n=22,258)
- 617 L/L programs
- 4 campus site visits in 2008
NSLLP: four sources of data

**BASELINE SURVEY**
- LLP and traditional student respondents
- I-E-O conceptual framework
- Quasi experimental design

**LLP STAFF SURVEY**
- General information about LLP operations
- Respondents are LLP staff

**CAMPUS CASE STUDIES**
- 4 site visits in Spring 2008
  - Clemson University
  - Florida State University
  - Miami University of Ohio
  - University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- Chosen based on survey data

**LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP**
- 16 of 34 original schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>LLPs</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>23,910</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>46</td>
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NSLLP: quasi-experimental design

Sample

LLP participants

Proxy for pre-test

Comparison sample [matched to LLP sample]

Condition

LLP participation

Post-test or outcome
Also: multiple conditions

LLP Participants

LLP #1
LLP #2
LLP #3

Comparison sample [matched to LLP sample]
CONDUCTING YOUR OWN LLP ASSESSMENTS
Inspirations from the NSLLP

1. I-E-O FRAMEWORK

2. QUASI EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

3. MIXED METHODS
   - Student experiences survey
   - LLP operations survey
   - Case studies, including:
     - Interviews
     - Focus groups
     - Observations
RESULTS FROM THE NSLLP
Good resource on LLP research

Inkelas, K. K., & Soldner, M. (2011). Undergraduate living-learning programs and student outcomes. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory & Research*, 26, 1-55.
TYPOLOGY OF U.S. LLP THEMES
NSLLP typology of living-learning programs

- Content analysis of over 600 LLPs in 2007 study

- Classified 41 types of LLPs in 17 broad themes

- There’s a lot more diversity among LLPs than simply Residential Colleges!
NSLLP typology of living-learning programs
41 themes distilled into 17 broad categories

- Civic & Social Leadership (4 types)
- Disciplinary (12 types)
- Fine & Creative Arts (2 types)
- General Academic
- Honors
- Cultural (3 types)
- Leisure (3 types)
- Political Interest
- Residential College
- Research
- ROTC
- Sophomore
- Transition (4 types)
- Umbrella
- Upper Division
- Wellness/Health (2 types)
- Women’s (2 types)
ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U.S. LLPs
Not all LLPs are created equally….

- Median budget of LLPs: US$5,000 (in 2007 dollars)
  - 25% had budgets of $1,000 or less

- 23% had no faculty involvement whatsoever
  - 64% had only 1-3 faculty involved with LLP

- Nearly half (43-46%) are run and overseen solely by Housing/Residence Life staff
FINDINGS FROM THE LLP RESEARCH
## Student outcomes associated with living-learning involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student outcome</th>
<th>Published work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance</td>
<td>Stassen (2003); Purdie (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Pike, et al. (1997); Purdie (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>Pike (1999); Inkelas, et al. (2006a, 2006b), Kohl (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty interaction</td>
<td>Garrett &amp; Zabriskie (2003); Inkelas, et al. (2006b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer interaction</td>
<td>Pike (2009); Inkelas, et al. (2006a)</td>
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*Note: Authors in orange text utilized NSLLP data*
# Student outcomes associated with living-learning involvement

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<td>Transition to college</td>
<td>Inkelas &amp; Associates (2004); Inkelas, et al. (2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residence hall climate</td>
<td>Inkelas &amp; Weisman (2003); Inkelas, et al. (2006a, 2006b); Johnson, et al. (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced binge drinking</td>
<td>Brower, et al. (2003); Brower (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity appreciation</td>
<td>Inkelas, et al. (2006a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of civic engagement</td>
<td>Rowan-Kenyon, et al. (2007)</td>
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However…

- Strongest outcomes among U.S. college students in LLPs were related to traditional activities most closely associated with being a new college student:
  - Reducing binge, or excessive, alcohol consumption
  - Interacting more with fellow peers and faculty
  - Establishing a sense of belonging to the institution

- Positive, but low effect sizes, for other outcomes with loftier goals:
  - Intellectual development
  - Diversity appreciation
  - Love of lifelong learning
ONE FINAL STUDY:
NSLLP FOUR CAMPUS CASE STUDY
2008 campus site visits

• Used NSLLP survey data to identify living-learning best practices

• Selected four campuses for case study
  • University of Maryland, Baltimore County
  • Miami University of Ohio
  • University of Florida
  • Clemson University
Campus site visit findings

• Academic/Student Affairs partnerships integral to effective living-learning programs, but partnerships can take different forms
  • Nature of partnerships largely dependent upon institutional culture

• Peer interaction/bonding is the most powerful influence on students in living-learning programs, but there can be negative side-effects as well

• Effective living-learning programs are not necessarily ones with lots of “bells & whistles” -- what is more important is the level of integration across the activities within the program
A little humor
Based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

- **Physiological**
  - breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

- **Safety**
  - security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property

- **Love/Belonging**
  - friendship, family, sexual intimacy

- **Esteem**
  - self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

- **Self-actualization**
  - morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts
A LLP “hierarchy of needs”

- **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**
- **CO-CURRICULAR ENVIRONMENT**
- **“ICING”**
LLP best practices building blocks

- Intentional integration
  - Study groups
  - K-12 outreach
  - Visiting work settings
  - Career workshops

- CO-CURRICULAR ENVIRONMENT
  - Courses for credit
  - Faculty advising
  - Academically supportive climate
  - Socially supportive climate
  - Study groups
  - K-12 outreach
  - Visiting work settings
  - Career workshops

- ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT
  - Clear goals & objectives
  - Academic Affairs
  - Housing
  - Adequate resources

- INFRA-STRUCTURE
  - Collaboration

"ICING"
Mortar between the bricks = assessment
Questions?
Final activity: goal setting

Living-Learning Research

- Based on the NSLLP methodology, write down 2-3 frameworks or research techniques you plan to use in your next LLP (or other, related program) assessment:

1. _______________________
2. _______________________
3. _______________________

Living-Learning Practice

- Based on the NSLLP best practices model, write down 2-3 areas of your LLP (or other, related program) you plan to address when you return to your institution:

1. _______________________
2. _______________________
3. _______________________
Thank you!

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