Exploring the Effects of Living-Learning Centers in the Korean Context

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Introduction

• Background of this research
  – LLC is different from sleep-and-eat residence model
  – “High impact practices” of HEI(Kuh et al., 2005)
  – Spread of LLC outside of US: HK, Singapore, and Korea in recent years

• Research question
  – What are different effects of LLC, if compared to conventional residence halls?
Theoretical Framework(I)

• History of LLC
  – Residential model of Cambridge and Oxford
  – Living-learning programs of US colleges and universities
  – Residence halls with various themes according to which many curricular and co-curricular activities take place under the supervision of faculties or residential assistants
Theoretical Framework(II)

• Ecological approach to LLC
  – Understanding LLC as an important learning environment
  – Ecological perspective to learning environment: Students develop in the interaction with environments surrounding them
  – Learning environments of HEI have critical elements(Strange & Banning, 2001)
Theoretical Framework (III)

• Ecological aspects of campus environment of (Strange & Banning, 2001)
  – Physical environment
  – Human environment
  – Organizational environment
  – Constructive environment
Theoretical Framework (III)

- A hierarchy of the purposes of learning environments (Strange & Banning, 2001)

- Level 3: Community (full membership)
- Level 2: Involvement (participation, engagement, Role-taking)
- Level 1: Safety and Inclusion (sense of security and belonging)
Method(I)

• A single case study
  – A Korean university which has converted its eight residence halls into LLC over last 3 years
  – 3,200 enrollment, 75% students live on campus, famous with a co-curricular program (team community)
  – All students and faculties are engaged in LLC activities
Method(II)

• Qualitative research
  – Interviews with 14 students with experience with non-LLCs and LLCs
  – Two focus group interviews with freshmen (LLC vs. non-LLCs)
  – Interview with a headmaster of a LLC
  – Observation with a LLC faculty workshop
Findings(I)

• Sense of safety and inclusion
  – Attachment to physical residence halls
    ✓ Stable residence environment: same people, same building
    ✓ From “I live in this hall during this semester” to “I belong to the community residing in this hall”
  – A meso-level umbrella community
    ✓ Between the whole university community and the smallest team community
    ✓ An ideal size of community(300~400 students) in which community cultures and group competence can be cultivated
Findings(II)

• Involvement
  – Ready to be educated
    ✓“Here is an arena of education, different from the old residence halls where we just slept and ate
  – Involvement as a right and obligation of members
    ✓ “As a member, I feel obliged to join them”
    ✓ “The events are specially prepared only for us!”
  – Intimacy promotes involvement
    ✓ Informal events were more appreciated by students
Findings(III)

• Sense of Community
  – Practice of leadership
    ✓“I want to contribute to my community as a full member”
    ✓Appreciation of reference groups
  – Contribution to society
    ✓“Application of what we have learned to our society”
Discussion

• Effective LLC environments
  – Physical environment
    ✓ Enlargement of common spaces
    ✓ Room structure: double, triple or more?
  – Human environment
    ✓ Volunteers first policy
    ✓ Faculty involvement
  – Organizational environment
    ✓ Autonomous management under supervision of faculties
  – Constructive environment
    ✓ LLCs’ cultures are weak yet
    ✓ LLC’s themes are the seed of cultural development
Conclusion

• LLCs were more effective than conventional residence halls in meeting the developmental needs of students
• LLC’s environmental factors contributed to creating those effects
• HEIs should view LLC an arena of education and make efforts to design and improve its environmental factors so that it can attain educational goals: Balance is important!