Lessons Learned about One High-Impact Practice

Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas
University of Maryland
February 15, 2010

29th Annual Conference on the First Year Experience
Denver, CO
High-impact practices

From: AAC&U

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- **Learning Communities** → Living-Learning Programs
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

From: http://www.aacu.org/LEAP/hip.cfm
What are living-learning programs? (And, what’s so great about them?)

Learning communities:

- Paired or clustered courses
- Cohorts in large courses, or FIGs
- Team-taught programs
- Residence-based learning communities:
  - Residential Colleges
  - Living-Learning Centers
  - Residential Learning Communities
  - First Year Experience Programs
  - Theme Housing
Defining Living-Learning Programs

- From the NSLLP:
  - 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

- And, they’re a high-impact practice!
National Study of Living-Learning Programs
Study staff

University of Maryland
Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas
*Principal Investigator*

Katalin Szelényi
*Post-Doctoral Fellow*

Matthew Soldner
*ACUHO-I/NASPA Fellow*

*Graduate Research Assistants:*
Chris Corces Zimmerman
Marybeth Drechsler
Yoolee Cho Kim
Jay Garvey
Nicole Long
Michele Mackie
Claire Robbins

University of Wisconsin - Madison
Aaron Brower
*Co-Principal Investigator*

Survey Sciences Group, LLC
Scott Crawford
Brian Hempton
Tina Mainieri
Sara Showen
National Study of Living-Learning Programs

Sources of funding

- The National Science Foundation
- ACUHO-I
- NASPA
- ACPA
National Study of Living-Learning Programs
A short history

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

The 2004 NSLLP
- 34 institutions
- 23,910 students
- 297 L/L programs
- $T_1$ data collection

The 2007 NSLLP
- 46 institutions
- $T_2$ follow-up (n=1,509)
- New baseline (n=22,258)
- 617 L/L programs
National Study of Living-Learning Programs

Four sources of data

- Baseline survey completed by L/L and TRH students
  - 2004: 34 institutions
  - 2007: 46 institutions

- 2007: Longitudinal follow-up study of the original 2004 schools
  - 16 follow-up participants

- Living-learning programs survey
  - One survey for each L/L program on the respective campus
  - Respondents are L/L staff or Residence Life staff with oversight of L/Ls

- Four campus site visits identified through survey data
  - Site visits occurred in Spring 2008
  - Schools included: Clemson University, Florida State University, Miami University of Ohio, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
# National Study of Living-Learning Programs

## Question types on student surveys

(Based on Astin I-E-O framework)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Environments</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Demographics</td>
<td>• Academic major</td>
<td>• Academic and social transition to college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High school achievement</td>
<td>• Peer interactions</td>
<td>• Perceptions of intellectual abilities and growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-college assessment of importance of college involvement and perceptions of self-confidence</td>
<td>• Faculty interactions</td>
<td>• Perceptions of self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Co-curricular involvement</td>
<td>• Appreciation of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Study group interactions</td>
<td>• Sense of civic engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alcohol-related experiences</td>
<td>• Alcohol use and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of residence hall resources</td>
<td>• Persistence/drop-out risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Perceptions of residence hall climate</td>
<td>• College GPA self-reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Diverse interactions</td>
<td>• Overall satisfaction and sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Time spent on leisure activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• STEM related questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Study of Living-Learning Programs
Questions on the L/L Program 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civic &amp; Social Leadership (4 types)</th>
<th>Residential College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary (12 types)</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine &amp; Creative Arts (2 types)</td>
<td>ROTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Academic</td>
<td>Transition (2 types)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors</td>
<td>Umbrella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural (3 types)</td>
<td>Upper Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure (2 types)</td>
<td>Wellness/Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>Women’s (2 types)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on content analysis of 2007 NSLLP data
L/L profile
Basic characteristics of programs

Size
✓ Median size of program .......... 52
✓ Modal size of program ............. 50
✓ Largest programs have over 1,000 students (n=11)

Cost
✓ Average cost of program ...... $21K
✓ Mean cost of program .......... $5K
✓ 10% of programs had no budget
✓ 25% had budgets under $1K

Configuration
✓ Programs housed within one discrete portion of residence hall .................. 71%
✓ Encompass entire residence hall .................. 18%
✓ Rest were unique arrangements
# L/L profile
## Basic characteristics of programs

### Oversight
- Residence Life/Housing only ..... 47%
- Academic Dept/Affairs unit only................................. 15%
- Combination Student Affairs/ Academic Affairs......................... 31%
- Rest are other arrangements

### Professional affiliation of director
- Residence Life................................. 43%
- Academic Department........... 21%
- Combination................................. 13%
- Multi-person board.......... 8%
- Rest are other
Goals of L/L programs most often listed as “very important”

- Experiencing a smooth academic transition to college (55%)
- Feeling a sense of belonging to the institution (54%)
- Demonstrating openness to views different than one’s own (52%)
- Learning about others different than one’s self (50%)
- Experiencing a smooth social transition to college (50%)
52% of L/L programs in NSLLP did not include any form of academic coursework

- 28% provided only one course
- 14% offered two courses
- Outlier: 1 program offered more than 20 courses

Of forms of coursework integrated into program, most popular were:

- Specially designed courses for L/L program (11%)
- Credit-bearing courses co-listed by an academic department (9%)
Faculty involvement

- 23% had no faculty involvement at all
- 64% included 1-3 faculty members

Most common forms of faculty involvement were:
- Teaching
- Conducting workshops
- Mentorship
- Attendance at social events
- Serving on advisory boards
- Academic advising
L/L profile

Student affairs staff involvement

- 85% utilized student affairs staff in some way

- Most common forms of staff involvement were:
  - Administrative tasks
  - Living in community
  - Attending social events
  - Mentorship
  - Conducting workshops
  - Supervising RAs
### L/L profile

**Co-curricular activities offered**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIRED</th>
<th>OPTIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Cultural outings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group projects</td>
<td>Multicultural programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>Study groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising</td>
<td>Career workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning</td>
<td>Community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation: 23%</td>
<td>Cultural outings: 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group projects: 14%</td>
<td>Multicultural programs: 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities: 12%</td>
<td>Study groups: 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising: 12%</td>
<td>Career workshops: 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning: 11%</td>
<td>Community service: 70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSLLP scales related to AAC&U essential learning outcomes

NSLLP
- Critical thinking/analysis abilities
- Application of knowledge abilities
- Growth in cognitive complexity
- Growth in liberal learning
- Growth in personal philosophy
- Diversity appreciation
- Sense of civic engagement

AAC&U ELOs
- Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
- Intellectual and Practical Skills
- Personal and Social Responsibility
- Integrative Learning
Living-learning participation and student learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>TRH</th>
<th>LLP</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking/analysis abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of knowledge abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in cognitive complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in liberal learning</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in personal philosophy</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity appreciation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of civic engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Living-learning participation and other outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>TRH</th>
<th>LLP</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smooth academic transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Low-Mod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth social transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Low-Mod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Low-Mod</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LLP components related to student outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic components</th>
<th>Social components</th>
<th>Co-curricular components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course-related interaction with faculty members</td>
<td>Academically-related discussions with peers</td>
<td>Career workshops (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied with peers</td>
<td>Socio-culturally-related discussions with peers</td>
<td>Internships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence hall climate supportive of academics</td>
<td>Residence hall climate supportive of cultural differences</td>
<td>Visiting work settings related to field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outreach to local K-12 schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Outcomes include critical thinking, application of knowledge, civic engagement, academic transition, social transition, sense of belonging. Analysis controls for: race/ethnicity, gender, SES, high school GPA, SAT score, pre-test of dependent variable
A LLP “hierarchy of needs”
“Hierarchy of needs”
LLP best practices building blocks

“ICING”
Intentional integration

Study groups
K-12 outreach
Visiting work settings
Career workshops

Courses for credit
Faculty advising
Academically supportive climate
Socially supportive climate

Academic departments
Residence Life

Funding
Collaboration
Dedicated residence hall space
Living-learning programs have limited effectiveness in facilitating essential learning outcomes.

However, they have better success with outcomes associated with making the transition to college.

*Note: Vast majority of LLPs cater to first-year students*

LLP best practices incorporate:

- Infrastructure, including an Academic/Student Affairs partnership
- Academic components (courses, faculty advising, supportive climate)
- Co-curricular components (study groups, K-12 outreach, visiting work settings, career workshops)
- Intentional integration of all of the above

However, many (if not most) LLPs are missing one or more of the above components.
Contact information

Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas
Associate Professor, University of Maryland
Principal Investigator, National Study of Living-Learning Programs
Faculty Director, Advocates for Children, College Park Scholars Program

Website: www.livelearnstudy.net
Email: kinkelas@umd.edu