



EYP/ research

Assessing How Living-Learning Environments
Within Residence Halls Facilitate Student Learning

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Table of Contents

Purpose and Goals of the Study	7
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Confidentiality Statement

This report has been developed by EYP, Inc. (EYP) at significant expense, devotion of resources, and time. As such, EYP considers the report as its proprietary information.

Purpose and goals of the study:

EYP is committed to designing and creating college residence halls that promote and enrich student life and learning. These living-learning spaces have long been the cornerstone of higher education, from early colonial residence halls that also housed the classrooms and faculty homes, to a recent renaissance of residential colleges and the growth of new kinds of residential learning communities.

The purpose of this study is to assess how key spaces in residence halls (i.e., living-learning spaces vs. traditional residence halls) create environments that are conducive to student learning. It is our hope that, as a result of this study, future architectural designs of residence halls will incorporate our findings to create student residences that optimally facilitate student learning. Moreover, we hope that this work will inform University Housing and Residence Life practitioners on how to make the best use of their existing spaces.

Our study will examine student usage of a variety of living-learning residence hall spaces, including:

- Student living spaces
- Large gathering spaces
- Small gathering spaces
- Dining areas
- Classrooms
- Faculty/staff offices
- Study rooms
- Resources and services
- Outdoor space

We also seek to understand how utilization of this space may contribute to several critical student outcomes, such as:

- Overall student engagement in campus life
- Interactions with others, including peers, faculty, and student affairs staff
- General satisfaction with living arrangements and the university-at-large
- Academic performance

Preliminary assessment method plans:

Our study will use a mixed-method, two-phase design. First, in order to understand if and how living-learning environments facilitate student learning and related outcomes, we will study students in two different settings: 1) students living in an EYP residence hall intentionally designed to be living-learning space; and 2) students living in traditional residence hall spaces not necessarily designed to be living-learning spaces. We will work with campus contacts to identify appropriate residence halls for the second setting.

For the first phase of the study, we will perform observations of space usage in the EYP-designed residence hall and at least one traditional residence hall. The methods through which these observations will be made will be determined in consultation with campus contacts. In addition, we may conduct short interviews with students found to be using the space when the observations occur. This phase of the study will provide insight into who uses these spaces, what activities they perform while using the spaces, when they tend to utilize the spaces the most, why they choose to use these spaces, and how they typically use the spaces.



Examples of observations we may make include:

1. Who is using the space?
 - a. Student (plus, type of student)
 - b. Faculty
 - c. Staff
 - d. Community member
 - e. Combination
2. What are they doing?
 - a. Studying
 - b. Socializing
 - c. Working on some sort of group project
 - d. Meeting for a student organization
 - e. Meeting with a professor
 - f. Other
3. When are they using the space, and for how long?
4. Why are they choosing to use this space for their activity?
 - a. Why do they prefer this space?
 - b. What other spaces have they used previously for this kind of activity?
5. How are they using the space?
 - a. By themselves
 - b. With a small group of people
 - c. With a large gathering
 - d. Using desk space
 - e. Using technology in room
 - f. Other

On the basis of using the information collected from the initial observations, we will develop a survey instrument that will be administered to students living in the EYP and traditional residence halls. The questionnaire will query students about the various spaces they may or may not use in their building. It will also assess several student outcomes, including their overall engagement, interactions with others, general satisfaction, and academic performance.

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