

Indiana State University Residential Life

Student Learning Outcomes Nursing Theme Housing Academic Performance, 2004-2007

Background

Since the fall of 2004, Indiana State University's Office of Residential Life has been engaged in ongoing assessment of the academic success of students residing on the Nursing theme floor. While different types of measurement methodologies have been employed over the past three years, each has indicated positive outcomes in overall student learning. The Nursing floor has served as a model for other academic theme floors for faculty involvement and student support offerings. This report presents the evolution of a strong program and defines the model currently employed, which can be replicated in other housing units. The overall goal of the program seeks to improve student learning outcomes, thus having a positive impact on overall persistence, retention and graduation of the program's student participants.

The program itself has several distinct goals for participating Nursing students, which include,
Improved academic performance as indicated by grades received
To have a minimum of 4 interactions with Nursing faculty members each semester

Improved Academic Performance
The primary goal of the program is:

Nursing students living on the nursing floor will benefit academically by utilizing tutoring services in the residence hall by a Learning Community Peer Advocate (LCPA) tutors. Nursing students who utilize this service will show greater academic progress per semester than nursing students not utilizing these services.

The primary measure of outcomes is the mean student grade point average as compared to the population of students enrolled in the nursing program, regardless of their housing status.

Historical Antecedents to Current Data

During the first two years of the program, inconsistent tutoring from the floor's LCPA made the collection of valid data difficult to the point that no cause and effect relationship could be supported as inconsistent attendance records were kept. In the third year of the program, the floor's LCPA was a nursing major, and accurate attendance records were maintained for students attending study sessions for an anatomy class for first year nursing majors.

Nursing 231 Study Sessions as Indicator

In the first semester of the 2006-2007 academic year, thirty-six theme floor residents participated in tutoring sessions for Anatomy 106, a course that has historically been difficult for many first year nursing students. A preliminary finding indicated that residents attending tutoring sessions performed better than student who did not. Table 1 below presents outcomes GPA's. It is important to note that the Academic Peer Advocate (APA) providing tutoring sessions reported that in many cases, residents receiving low grades for the semester chose to attend tutoring sessions did so only after they had received a poor mid-term grade. The APA had suggested that the residents who had chosen to start attending later in the semester did improve academic progress regardless of the overall semester GPA earned.

Mean GPA N=36	Mean GPA of students attending 9 or more sessions	Mean GPA of those attending 11 or more sessions
2.61	2.7	2.835

Nursing Floor Participation in Anatomy 106 Study Session Comparison

Retention Information

In the fall of 2005, thirty-three women resided on the second floor of Cromwell Hall. Of the total participants, 76% (n=25) were nursing majors, with the other 24% (n=8) majoring in other disciplines including Pre-medicine, Business, Sports & Recreation, Psychology, Pre-early Education and one resident as Open Preference. Of the thirty-three floor residents, 70% (n=23) returned to the residence hall system the following fall semester. Of those not returning, 50% (n=5) were not nursing majors. Of the original 33 students, three became residence hall staff members the following fall semester, serving as Resident Assistants and an Academic Peer Advocate (APA) majoring in nursing.

Faculty involvement

To improve and increase the quality of interaction of faculty, participants are expected to have four "interactions" with members of the Nursing faculty each semester with the expected outcome leading to students understanding faculty members as supportive and responsive to them. A number of programs were developed to offer opportunities for high quality faculty interaction as described below.

Dinner with the Stars Program

The program "Dinner with the Stars" was created by the faculty coordinator for first-year programs to provide opportunities for participants to interact with faculty members during an evening meal in the residence hall dining facility.

Faculty Visits to Participants

Through the floor visits program, nursing faculty members personally visited the theme housing floor and met with sophomore students to provide study and preparation suggestions. A special Thanksgiving program was held in November where faculty and nursing students joined together to prepare a dinner. A final program was conducted where participants were provided personalized assistance in advising and registration, in which approximately twenty-five residents participated.

In addition to specific floor-oriented programs, participants also took advantage of several programs offered by the Nursing college, including a visit to the "Pumpkin Works," and participation in community service events such as the Relay for Life and March of Dimes Walks offered in the spring semester.

For the past three years, residents regularly and positively comment on the faculty interaction of this program in which Deb Barnhart, coordinator of the first year program along with Dale Ann O'Neal were recognized for their work by being nominated for the First Year Initiative's Annual Faculty Recognition Banquets. Students who participated in these events continue to report increased satisfaction with the program, particularly as it relates to comfort level in approaching faculty members as well as reporting that faculty care for their respective academic success in the nursing program (see comments offered below).

During the assessment process for the current academic year (2006-2007), two faculty members were asked to report their benefits of being involved with the theme floor housing program. This provided the assessment process with a triangulation of observations and further validated the incentives for participating in the program. Just a few of the comments offered by the faculty members include:

As a faculty member of the nursing program, please report successes of the first year theme nursing floor program.

Increased GPA - Better study groups - Increased class participation - Increased participation in CON activities - Increased community service - Increased communication with faculty advisors

"The students in the first year who are living on the theme floor report very positive experiences which include a strong support network, academic support, and cohesiveness among the nursing students."

When asked about academic performance related to the theme floor, the faculty advisor commented,

"Yes. Students have the opportunity to have as neighbors other nursing students who are taking similar classes. Also having the RA and the APA as nursing students has been of great benefit this year. They have been in the shoes the new freshmen are in so seem to have a better understanding of what it takes to be a nursing student. Students who are on other floors/dorms come to the study sessions and tutoring on the floor."

Both faculty members were asked how participating in the theme floor program as a faculty member has benefited their instruction. These comments followed:

"I have attended dinner with the students and have been able to be more engaged with them in the classroom because of the experience outside the academic setting."

"I can work directly with the RA and the APA in setting programs that are more directed to the needs of nursing students. There develops a sense of "we are in this together" and that helps students identify study partners and opens communication with faculty. Also, I have a place where I can come and meet with students in a more informal manner."

These faculty members also shared how residents of the floor have commented in regards to the positive benefits of residing on this theme floor. The faculty has listed these comments as being observed:

"It was so nice to know if I had a problem I could just go next door and ask for help."

"It was great having student and tutor sessions right on the floor."

"I was going to live elsewhere but I am glad I stayed on the nursing floor."

"I have developed such a support that we are going to live together again next year."

"Overall the experience is perceived as valuable and has helped them integrate into the nursing program and also into the broader University setting. They appear confident in establishing relationships and engaging in University events and activities," commented Dale Ann O'Neal, a faculty member who has been nominated two years in a row for recognition as part of our annual faculty recognition program.

Faculty members have been so supportive of the program that suggestions for the program have been minimal. Faculty has recommended that the theme floor become a pure theme housing floor, particularly on the second floor. In past years, residents who reside on the floor who have not been nursing majors have taken away from the total experience as in some cases, these students in programs that are not as educationally demanding as nursing, has caused the nursing students to not be as focused on their academic pursuits as intently as they should.

Faculty members commented that although they did not have any quantitative data to share of the positive implications of this academic theme floor, they did mention the qualitative aspects and how important they are to the success of the program. Faculty members concluded with the following comments in summary of their observations of the program:

“High morale of students, observing positive and supportive relationships among the nursing students, assistance with academic success and study groups, opportunity to interact with faculty during the residence hall dinners.”

“Being able to meet students in their “home”- relax with them and eat dinner with them. I have developed a better relationship with these students because they have seen me and other faculty outside the CON. ”

Nursing Theme Floor Assessment Evolution

Since the fall semester of 2004, the collaboration between the Office of Residential Life and College of Nursing has grown significantly. The nursing theme floor program has continued to grow and develop as students, administrators, and faculty have communicated to make alterations and continue to offer ideas for improvements on a program that is very successful. Listed below is a brief view of developments as the program has evolved since its inception. The final section of this assessment report shows the initial Assessment report filed for the Office of Residential Life in May of 2005 as a comparison, specifically to this year’s assessment.

Assessment of Academic Performance

While both departments continue to pursue ways to gauge academic success based on involvement in the program, qualitative comments from residents continue to demonstrate improved confidence in academics if involved in living on the floor.

In the first year of assessment, there was no way to assess academic performance comparing to participation to academic performance. This initial year was designed to establish groundwork for the program for future students.

Number of Spring Survey Respondents

<u>2005</u> 41	<u>2006</u> 34	<u>2007</u> 90
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Key Results from Spring Surveys

Recommend Future FY Nursing Students reside on floor –
Nursing Floor residents:

<u>2005</u> 100%	<u>2006</u> 100%	<u>2007</u> 94%
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Non-Nursing Floor residents have even expressed support for such a program:

<u>2005</u> 76%	<u>2006</u> 63%	<u>2007</u> 89%
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Faculty Interactions per academic year

2005
8

2006
8

2007
13

Interaction with faculty outside of the classroom (Nursing Floor residents responding)

2005
100%

2006
90%

2007
94%

Interaction with faculty outside of classroom (Non-Nursing Floor residents responding)

2005
21%

2006
42%

2007
62%

Self-Reported Performance by year:

Survey Year/Group	Excellent (All A's)	Good (A's & B's)	Fair (B's & some C's)	Poor (C's & D's)	Terrible (D's & F's)
(2005) Nursing	25%	75%	0	0	0
(2005) Non-Nursing	8%	39%	14%	1%	0
(2006) Nursing	0	80%	10%	10%	0
(2006) Non-Nursing	0	58%	21%	4%	0
(2007) Nursing	5%	39%	39%	22%	0
(2007) Non-Nursing	8%	60%	31%	3%	0

Fall Semester Grade Point Averages of Nursing floor(s) since program inception:

2004
3.11

2005
2.89

2006
2.78

Comments offered from spring 2007 surveys:

Benefits of meeting with the faculty outside of the classroom (Nursing Floor Respondents)

"They are very helpful - Always willing to go the extra mile if you need help."

"You get to know them outside the classroom – their personality."

"Helps to get you on the right track to whatever you need."

"We understand each other better."

"It relieves a lot of stress talking with the faculty – really takes the weight off my shoulders."

"Getting to know them better and learn more about the program."

"Yes – prepared me for upcoming years in the nursing program."

"Getting to know them on a personal level and extra help with work."

"Making connections for the future."

"It's nice to get some no-school time with them and form a one on one status."

"Get to know who you will be with the next four years and feel better about going up to them with questions about or not about class."

"Getting to know professors I will have later in the major."

Resident Comments in general

"It was a wonderful experience – I really liked it!"

"It was a very useful experience – I loved it!"

"Opportunity to ask questions outside of classroom, get to know them, they got to know us better."

"I loved living in C-well 2! It was a great experience

It was a good experience however some of the girls were very uncooperative for group study and not nice.

"It is a very good idea to live with other nursing majors b/c they know what your going through."

Good experience, get to know people in Nursing major, easier to get help because everyone on the floor has the same classes."

The Office of Residential Life are also including constructive comments that assist us in evaluating our efforts with the theme floor as we offered two floors of nursing theme housing this year.

"The 3rd floor is left out of most activities b/c there are less nursing students on it."

"Since APA was on 2nd floor, the 3rd floor was left out of several activities – academic & non-academic

"Like the Thanksgiving dinner. Need to work with all the girls, not just the ones on her floor."

"Living n that floor was awful! I moved second semester and all the girls were mean tome and wouldn't talk to me." (One resident who didn't recommend this living option)

General Conclusions

Listed below are some basic conclusions gathered through this assessment project.

There continues to be a desire of residents for this type of theme floor program

There continues to be room for improvement in the area of academic performance

This program continues to generate enthusiasm and sense of community among the floor

Residents regularly comment positively on being able to study together on the floor

Residents have also complimented the efforts of study sessions and faculty involvement within the residence halls as well

This program has assisted in retaining residents to our residence halls - due to this sense of community as indicated to the cells that move close together the following year in Hines, Jones, and Lincoln Quad Halls

Faculty Involvement with residents is a desired outcome from both a resident and faculty perspective

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs can work well together in creating successful programs

Theme floors increase participation in academic events and encourage non-residents to participate in academic events as well

Suggestions for Continued Improvement

To continue in the evolution of this program, the following recommendations are offered in an effort to improve the program for the following academic year:

Nursing faculty and Residential Life staff should meet prior to the fall semester to establish goals for the semester/year including establishing new areas and means of assessment

Nursing faculty and Residential Life staff should meet regularly per month to evaluate academic performance and completion of goals established for the semester/year

Residential Life should continue to staff nursing majors as RAs and APAs on the floor

Nursing faculty should continue to advise students in the residence halls

LCPA and APA offering study sessions should keep better attendance records in demonstrating academic influence

Continuation of programs such as Dinner with the Stars and Thanksgiving meals should remain in place with similar meals added in the spring semester

Nursing faculty and Residential Life staff should present on their efforts to regional and national professional conferences

Nursing faculty and Residential Life staff should identify residents who are at risk as semester progresses and identify ways for interventions to take place

3rd floor residents need to be as integrated into the 2nd floor activities as much as possible

Nursing Theme Floor Services and Outcomes since fall 2004

Initial Assessment Plan Fall 2004

Program/Service	Learning Domain A	Learning Outcome A	Means to Measure
Theme Housing – Nursing Floor	Lifelong Learning	<p>Nursing students residing on the nursing floor will benefit academically by utilizing tutoring services in the residence hall by the LCPA tutors.</p> <p>Academic performance will be measured comparing semester grade point averages of Nursing Floor residents to non-Nursing Floor residents.</p>	<p>Nursing students who attend tutoring sessions will be asked to sign an attendance record. In cooperation with the Nursing department, comparison of on-going semester performance on tests will evaluate the benefits of tutoring program comparing the students, who have taken advantage of tutoring sessions versus those not attending the tutoring sessions.</p> <p>Comparison of semester grade point averages of students who have attended these sessions will be compared to those students not attending the sessions.</p> <p>Semester Grade Point averages will be compared between Nursing Floor residents and non-Nursing Floor residents.</p>
Theme Housing – Nursing Floor	Issues of Value and Belief / Community Engagement	<p>Nursing Floor residents will benefit from having four interactions with nursing faculty in the residence halls per semester – gaining insight and understanding about issues relevant to the nursing profession (i.e. national need for nurses and preparing for working in the medical field).</p>	<p>Nursing floor students who participate in these events will report that faculty are more supportive or responsive compared to non-Nursing floor residents. Nursing floor students will also report the benefits they gained by meeting with the faculty members through events in the residence halls.</p> <p>Nursing faculty will report the benefits of offering a nursing floor.</p>