

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recommended Reading List: Residential Life

Nupur Goyal*

This list is a curated compilation of articles and books that are recommended reading for pertinent topics within Residence Life. These readings were chosen as they provide a historical perspective of housing and residential life systems at colleges and universities as well as their adaptation in the United States, elaborate on the diverse aspects of residence life, and highlight the many benefits of living on campus. This list further highlights readings that discuss diverse aspects of residence life like staffing needs, living-learning communities, expectations for student conduct, US-based literature, and more.

By no means is this an exhaustive and all-encompassing list on topics related to residence life. However, it is a good starting point that spans a significant period of time and offers key insights. Unfortunately, much of the research and publications on this topic discuss aspects of residence life in the United States.

Some noteworthy readings in this list include the book *The Resident Assistant: Working with College Students in Residence Halls*, authored by Blimling and Miltenberger (1981), which describes the history of residence halls, starting with early models for housing from the United Kingdom and their gradual adaptation in the United States. This book also illustrates frameworks like *In Loco Parentis*, the Student Personnel Point of View, the Student Development Approach, and the rationale behind colleges and universities focusing on the holistic development of the undergraduate student.

Next, the publication *Learning Reconsidered 2* by Richard Keeling (2006) was an important document that convinced readers that the construction of meaning in a college setting no longer occurs only in the academic context. This document emphasises that academic learning and undergraduate student development processes come together in a format that requires all the resources of the college to function together in an integrated manner. Furthermore, residence halls were considered an important venue for this form of student learning and development.

In *Learning Reconsidered 2*, Keeling shares that successful integration of academic and co-curricular student learning experiences result in the student achieving many gains like orientation to their college environment, success in their studies, achieving a sense of belonging to the college, progressively understanding themselves, developing lively

* Dr Nupur Goyal is Director of Residential Life and University Community Standards, New York University, Shanghai. Email: ng25@nyu.edu

and significant interests and goals, learning to live with others, developing individuality and responsibility, and ultimately preparing for constructive career goals. For these key takeaways, *Learning Reconsidered 2* is a seminal document for readings on the topic of residence life.

The article by A.W. Astin (1973) established early on that undergraduate students in residence halls expressed more satisfaction with student friendships, faculty–student relationships, institutional reputation, and social life and that students were less likely to drop out and more likely to attain a baccalaureate degree in four years. Astin also shares that living in a residence hall during the first year was the most important environmental characteristic associated with finishing college. These factors made the development and success of residential campus living a crucial goal for colleges and universities.

The positive impact of residence halls is further explained in the book *Realizing the Educational Potential of Residence Halls* by Schroeder and Mable (1994). This book addresses the need for integrating students' formal academic experiences with their informal out-of-class experiences within the residence halls. This book focuses on the role of residence halls in student development, describes various programmes and initiatives for promoting student learning in residence halls, and illustrates the educational impact of college residence halls in detail. The book *Residence Hall Assistants in College* by M.L. Upcraft (1982) also affirms the important function of college residence halls to positively impact the academic performance of students living in the halls.

Similar to Blimling and Miltenberger, Upcraft (1982) also provides a historical timeline for the Resident Assistant position within US colleges and universities and articles by Pike (1999) and Pike, Schroeder and Berry (1997) confirm the importance and prevalence of the educational impact of Residence Halls. Next, Blimling and Miltenberger (1981) discuss the staffing needs of residence halls and the development of the Resident Assistant role and professional staff needs. The Resident Assistant role is a common factor amongst most colleges and universities and is being developed, adapted and finessed since its inception. In 2017, authors Beeny, Kolkmeier and Mastronardi Fisette produced tools for residence life staff for use in their everyday work with students. These modern tools are extremely helpful in designing intentional and impactful services, programmes and initiatives for residence life.

In his recent book, *Student Learning in College Residence Halls: What Works, What Doesn't, and Why*, Gregory Blimling (2015) discusses how the peer environment in residence halls advances student learning through best practices for community building and designing environments that produce measurable learning outcomes. In their book *Living-Learning Communities That Work: A Research-Based Model for Design, Delivery, and Assessment*, authors Kurotsuchi Inkelas, Jessup–Anger, Benjamin and Wawrzynski examine the research on the design, administration and assessment of living-learning communities. This book highlights the importance for structuring the peer environment in college residence halls to advance student learning and how these practices support student retention, learning and success.

Apart from all the positive outcomes of living in the residence halls, the book *Conduct and Community* by Hudson, Holmes and Holmes (2018) analyses several case studies and the experiences of experienced professionals to develop a practical resource for higher education professionals about student conduct in the on-campus residential setting. While earlier publications emphasised the positive correlation of on-campus living with gains for students, this book examined various aspects of student conduct in the residence halls and its impact on the experience of college students.

The final three chapters and books mentioned in this reading list include comprehensive literature on the influence of residence halls on students (Blimling, 1993), the process of creating campus environments that bolster student success (Strange & Banning, 2015) and a detailed discussion about Student Housing and Residential Life (Winston, Anchors & Associates, 1993).

This reading list offers evidence that students who have lived in college residence halls had a more enriched student learning experience, exceeded their predicted learning and development, were more involved in academic, extracurricular and social activities, and earned higher grade point averages, despite differences in ability (Upcraft, 1982). Moreover, there is a call for increasing internationalisation of college campuses to support the large and growing international student population in the United States, who often choose to live in the campus residence halls. This reading list will be beneficial to faculty and administrators who work with residential students and will help these stakeholders to understand the philosophy behind the work being done and to design services and programmes that support their vision.

History of Residence Life

Astin, A.W. (1973). The Impact of Dormitory Living on Students. *The Educational Record*, 54, 204-210.

Blimling, G.S. & Miltenberger, L.J. (1981). *The Resident Assistant: Working with College Students in Residence Halls*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.

Keeling, R. (2006). *Learning Reconsidered 2: A Practical Guide to Implementing a Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience*. American College Personnel Association, The Association of College and University Housing Officers – International, Association of College Unions International, National Academic Advising Association, National Association for Campus Activities, National Association for Students, Personnel Administrators and the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association.

Schroeder, C.C. & Mable, P. (1994). *Realizing the Educational Potential of Residence Halls*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Upcraft, M.L. (1982). *Residence Hall Assistants in College*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Student Learning in Residence Halls

Beeny, C.K., Kolkmeier, K. & Mastronardi Fisetto, D. (2017). *Learning Reconsidered: Making a case for BASIC*. Columbus, OH: The Association of College and University Housing Officers-International.

Blimling, G.S. (2015). *Student Learning in College Residence Halls: What works, what doesn't, and why?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119210795>

Living-Learning Communities

Kurotsuchi Inkelas, K., Jessup-Anger, J.E., Benjamin, M. & Wawrzynski, M.R. (2018). *Living-Learning Communities That Work: A Research-Based Model for Design, Delivery, and Assessment*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Pike, G.R. (1999). The Effects of Residential Learning Communities and Traditional Residential Living Arrangements on Educational Gains During the First Year of College. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(3), 260-284.

Pike, G.R., Schroeder, C.C. & Berry T.R. (1997). Enhancing the Educational Impact of Residence Halls: The Relationship between Residential Learning Communities and First-Year College Experiences and Persistence. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38(6), 609-621.

Student Conduct in Residence Life

Hudson, J., Holmes, A. & Holmes, R.C. (2018). *Conduct and Community*. Columbus, OH: The Association of College and University Housing Officers-International.

General Readings

Blimling, G.S. (1993). The Influence of College Residence Halls on Students. In: J. Smart (Ed.), *Higher Education: A Handbook of Theory and Research*, 350-396. New York: Agathon.

Strange, C.C. & Banning, J.H. (2015). *Designing for Learning: Creating Campus Environments for Student Success*. Second edition. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Winston, R.B., Anchors, S. & Associates (1993). *Student Housing and Residential Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

How to cite:

Goyal, N. 2020. Recommended Reading List: Residential Life, *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 8(1), 115-118. DOI: 10.24085/jsaa.v8i1.3824