

Assessing Peer Education in Student Affairs

CoRAC Conference 2019



Student Affairs
Assessment & Planning

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Introductions and Learning Outcomes

Following the presentation, participants will be able to ...

- Articulate the key factors that contribute to successful peer education programs in student affairs
- Develop a plan for assessing the effectiveness of peer education programs at their own institutions

Why peer education?



Rationale for Using Peer Educators

- Cost-effective
- Credible
- Empowering for those involved
- Utilizes an already established means of sharing information
- Peers might be more successful than professionals in passing along information
- Act as positive role models
- Education presented by peers may be acceptable when other education is not
- Educate those that are hard to reach through conventional methods
- Reinforce learning through ongoing contact



Literature Review

Defining Peer Education

- Based on the assumption that learners are often likely to relate to and trust others in their own circumstances
- Peer education programs train students to provide educational programming to fellow students
- Uses existing systems of social support that result in more organized, accurate, and influential support by peers

Peer Education Theories

- Social Learning Theory
- Social Inoculation Theory
- Role Theory
- Differential Association Theory
- Subculture Theory
- Communication of Innovations Theory

Fundamental Dimensions of Peer Educators

- Educational/career goal setting and appraisal
- Emotional and psychological support
- Academic Subject knowledge support
- Existence of a role model

Key Factors of Successful Peer Education

- 1) Planning a peer education program
- 2) Recruiting peer educators & population of impact
- 3) Comprehensive and ongoing training for peer educators
- 4) Supervision and mentoring
- 5) Systematic assessment and evaluation

A photograph of four people standing in a grassy field, each holding a large circular sign with a green checkmark. The people are dressed in casual attire: a man in a blue checkered shirt and jeans, a woman in a striped sleeveless top and dark pants, a woman in a white long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, and a man in a brown button-down shirt and dark pants. The background shows a city skyline under a clear sky.

Assessing Peer Education Programs

Outcomes-Based Assessment

Process Outcomes

- Utilization
- Satisfaction
- Connections
- Sense of belonging/
mattering

Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge
- Skill development
- Peer Educators
- Student participants

Assessment Methods

- Surveys
- Pre/Post Assessments
- Role play scenarios/
case studies
- Observations of peer
education sessions
- Peer educator session notes
- Self-reflection reports
- Educational record analysis
- Interviews/Focus groups
- Data triangulation
- *Others???*

Examples from CU Boulder



Academic Success & Achievement Program (A.S.A.P. Tutoring)

Goal 1. Tutor-Mentors: ASAP will strive to cultivate the full potential of tutoring staff. Exploring effective recruitment sources and enhancing efforts toward training and development opportunities will help retain a large base of skilled and experienced Tutor-Mentors.

Goal 2. Student Experience: In order to maximize students' opportunity for academic success at CU, the ASAP Office will provide the best support possible for all students needing assistance.

Goal 3. Population-specific Initiatives: ASAP has traditionally focused on serving undergraduate students who are living in CU residence halls. ASAP will begin developing academic programming which will serve students who live in other on-campus housing options in order to promote academic responsibility across a broader population of CU students (e.g. upperclassmen and graduate students).

A.S.A.P. Tutoring

Tutor-Mentors

- Document analysis (rosters, Erezlife reports)
- Shadowing Reflection Forms
- Training quizzes (Canvas)
- Post-training survey

Student Participants

- ASAP Orientation quizzes (Canvas)
- End-of-semester survey
- Tutor-Mentor evaluations
- Survey of dropped students
- Campus partner feedback

A.S.A.P. Tutoring

Use of Assessment Findings

- Tutors required to have students complete ASAP Orientation Experience at first session
- More specific questions around satisfaction to determine what areas need to be address (expectations, progress, etc.)
- Additional training on how tutors can discuss grades with students during sessions
- Need to revisit tracking method for referrals and adjust target to be more appropriate

Peer Wellness Coaching

Goal 1: Connect students to campus resources

- Refer students to appropriate resources to achieve their wellness goals
- Connect with at least one of the resources to which they were referred
- Develop a database of student resources

Goal 2: Enhance the ability of first-year students to cope effectively with the demands of University life

- Achieve their personal wellness goals
- Describe changes or improvements they have made to reach and sustain their wellness goals
- Able to cope with stress
- Satisfied with experience in program

Peer Wellness Coaching

Peer Wellness Coaches

- Pre/post training assessment
- Focus groups

Student Participants

- Pre/post coaching session inventory
- Coaching session notes
- Long term impact survey (future)
- Data triangulation with NCHA institutional data

Peer Wellness Coaching

Use of Assessment Findings

- Training improvements: more resource info, application of knowledge in individual conversations, addition of scenarios
- Adjusting outreach education
- Addition of drop-in hours to address cancellations/no-shows
- Attempt to identify number of sessions students need for impactful behavior change
- Addition of long-term impact survey (future)
- Support advocacy for campus resources

Buff Chats

Goal: To help residents feel valued and connected at CU and in the residence halls while challenging them to think critically, set and attain goals, develop meaningful relationships, and become more self-reflective

Developmental Level	Learning Outcome: After having a “transition” Buff Chat students will
Beginning	E1: List 2-3 differences or similarities between their friend group and themselves
	E2: Recognize one other student with different interests in the hall.
	E3: Define what difference means to them.
Developing	E4: Recall a time when they felt different from others in a past situation.
	E5: Identify others within their floor with different beliefs or values
	E6: Examine an experience they have had that has challenged a previously held belief
Advanced	E7: Identify ways to connect with others that have different experiences.
	E8: Initiate plans to connect with other residents through programs within the hall.
	E9: Engage in inclusive language and behaviors

Buff Chats

Qualitative Analysis of Buff Chat Reports

- Random sample of 50 Buff Chats selected from each residence hall (total 1,410 Buff Chats)
- Coded with the corresponding learning outcome or N/A

Buff Chats

Use of Assessment Findings

- Improved training on Buff Chat facilitation and documentation
- Addition of learning outcomes to the Buff Chat system for ease of coding
- Identification of additional learning opportunities that were happening during Buff Chats and could be added to plan
- Improvements to future coding process (randomized sample selection and assignment to Hall Directors to minimize bias and assumptions)

Thank you!

Contact Info

Crystal Cyr

Assessment Specialist

crystal.cyr@colorado.edu

(303) 735-5691

Kim Kruchen

Manager of Assessment & Planning

kimberly.Kruchen@colorado.edu

(303) 735-6642



Peer Education Assessment Resources

CORAC Presenters from the University of Colorado Boulder

Crystal Cyr, Assessment Specialist

✉ crystal.cyr@colorado.edu

☎ 303-735-5691

Kimberly Kruchen, Manager of Assessment and Planning

✉ kimberly.kruchen@colorado.edu

☎ 303-735-6642

Additional Resources

Blimling, G. S. (2015). *Student learning in college residence halls: What works, what doesn't, and why*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This book, written by a Rutgers Graduate School of Education professional, explores the effectiveness of residence halls on student learning, approaches to structure peer programming and the peer environment within residence halls, effective programs, current research, best practices, and historical feedback from residence hall operations. Contains information on how to structure assessment of residence hall learning and insights on strategic planning of future residence hall learning programming.

Brack, A. B., Millard, M., & Shah, K. (2008). Are peer educators really peers? *Journal of American College Health*, 56(5), 566-568.

Examines personality and temperament differences between peer educators and a control student population. Inventories and analyzes reported survey differences and similarities based on a number of employed scales. Identifies peer educators as typically stronger in natural leadership and self-esteem, but finds them similar to their peer control group.

Daddona, M. F. (2011). Peer educators responding to students with mental health issues. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), 29-39.

Provides an overview of current issues regarding student mental health as they are likely to manifest or interact with peer education programs and the student academic journey. Discusses the role of peer educators as bridges to other mental health and counseling support services for the audiences they serve, the appropriate role of a peer educator in a counseling or referral scenario, and best practices for peer educators navigating student mental health issues in the peer education relationship.

Dennett, C. G., & Azar, J. A. (2011). Peer educators in a theoretical context: Emerging adults. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), 7-16.

Discusses students and peer educators as developing adults in the academic setting in the context of a stage development theory, conflicts they may experience in their roles, and how supervisors of peer educators can approach issues that arise in the peer education program from a learning and development-focused perspective.



Establishing a Peer Education Program. (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/improving-services/peer-education/main>

This section of the Community Took Box provided by Kansas University addresses implementing and improving peer education programs that includes a well laid out overview on the structure, goals, and features of a successful peer education program.

Haber, P. (2011). Peer education in student leadership programs: Responding to co-curricular challenges. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), 65-76.

Examines current issues in leadership development primarily through peer interaction models and current leadership programs that use a peer interaction model. Discusses the benefits of peer interaction on leadership learning and the importance of peer interaction for success in leadership development programs.

Hintz, J. R. (2011). Peer educators responding to an institutional challenge: Off-campus student services. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), 87-95.

Examines the various institutional responses to deploying peer education to serve the needs of off-campus student populations, the benefits of peer educators engaging off-campus students to student sense of institutional connection, the positive effects peer educators provide in modeling good student and community behavior, and the role of peer educators as a student resource for navigating campus community issues.

Owen, J. E. (2011). Peer educators in classroom settings: Effective academic partners. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), 55-64.

Discusses the role of peer educators in a curricular/pedagogical context, focusing mostly on undergraduate peer teaching assistants, with mention of benefits and challenges faced by peer educators, peer learners, faculty, and institutions. Examines sources of support and goals for peer educators, a review of some peer educator programs, and the power of peer educators as a transformative step toward learning-centered education.

Turner, G. (1999). A method in search of a theory: Peer education and health promotion. *Health Education Research*, 14(2), 235-247.

Discusses the shortcomings of attaching significant adherence of common peer education practices to established theories within the context of health promotion. Examines and reviews connections with 10 theories through empirical data review and relevance to health promotion. Ultimately finds that while many theories have useful insight as to the effectiveness of peer education, many are too limited in scope and lack support from empirical evidence to provide a conclusive and comprehensive picture. Suggests peer education practices are still in search of a total theory to underpin them.

Ward, E. G., Thomas, E. E., & Disch, W. B. (2014). Mentor service themes emergent in a holistic, undergraduate peer-mentoring experience. *Journal of College Student Development*, 55(6), 563-579.

Examines the mechanics of peer mentoring and effects on development of their undergraduate audiences, resulting in the identification of seven themes of mentor service, two of which are identified as novel by the article. Suggests these themes and conceptual framework may be useful to other

institutions developing peer mentoring programs, especially for those serving traditionally underprepared and marginalized students making the college transition.

Williams, L. B. (2011). Editors Notes: The ongoing, and emerging, place of peer education. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), 1-6.

Provides a definition of and a historical context for peer education programs in academic settings. Discusses the rise of and importance of a shift away from teaching-centered strategies toward learning-centered strategies with an emphasis on the deployment of peer education approaches.

Williams, L. B. (2011). The future of peer education: Broadening the landscape and assessing the benefits. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), Retrieved April 1, 2019.

Discusses the benefits of peer education programs in providing for increased needs of the student population in the face of declining support for greater program funding at the institutional or curricular level. Reviews the assessment approaches and body of work surrounding peer education in the academic context. Argues for peer education as an enhancement to, but not a replacement for, traditional curricular approaches to education. Stresses the need for developing and assessing learning outcomes in peer education programs.

Wilson, W. L., & Arendale, D. R. (2011). Peer educators in learning assistance programs: Best practices for new programs. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2011(133), 41-53.

Discusses the elements and structures of peer education in learning assistance programs at the college level, highlighting four models currently in use at domestic institutions: Emerging Scholars Program, Supplemental Instruction, Peer-Led Team Learning, and Structured Learning Assistance. Provides an overview of structures, staffing, and support for new programs, as well as critical components for program success, faculty and administrative involvement, and assessment. Concludes that the college-level program structure for peer education has implications and usefulness for peer education programs at large and that college-level programs may be critical to providing necessary support to at-risk students and for historically difficult coursework.

Zeller, W. J. (2017). Residential learning communities: Creating connections between students, faculty, and student affairs departments. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 44(1), 74-85.

Examines the deployment of integrated curricular/co-curricular programs primarily through residence halls and their effects on student opportunities and development at Washington State University. Findings include an enhancement of campus community and student opportunity, as well as strong positive faculty response and engagement.