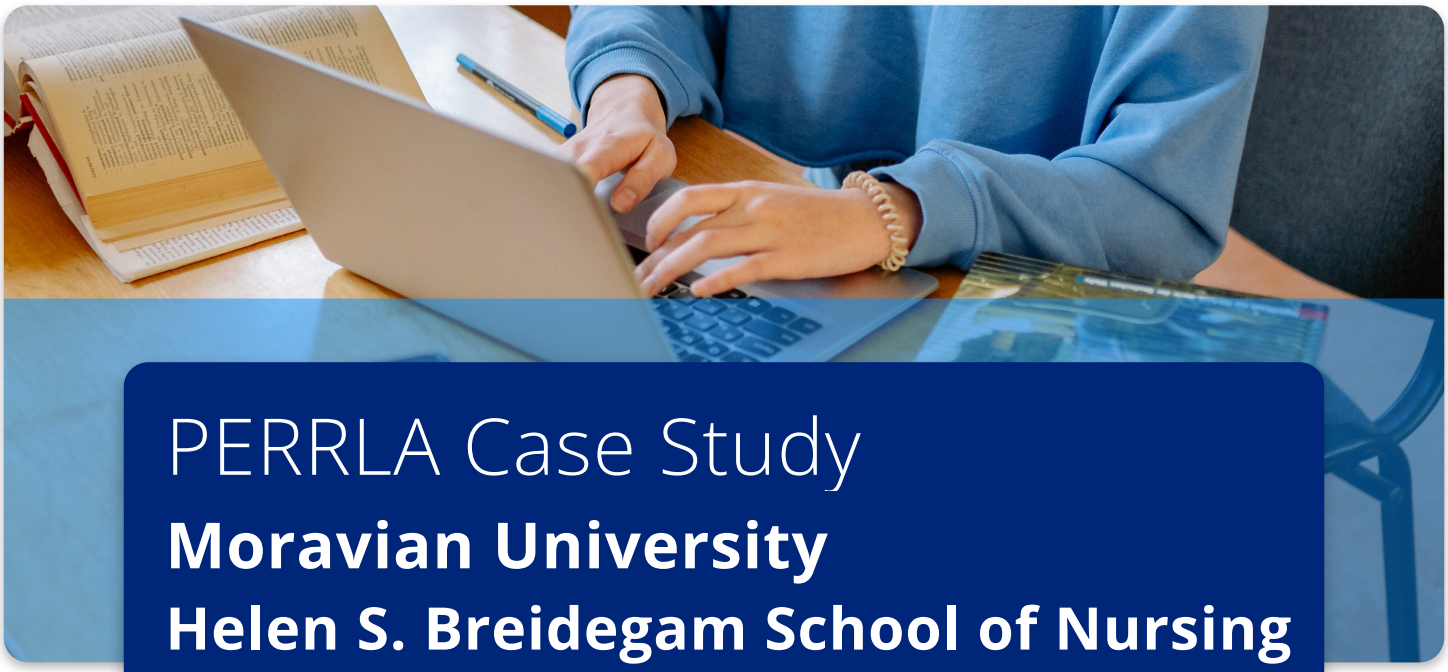


PERRLA Case Study

Moravian University
Helen S. Breidegam School of Nursing

Executive Summary

Moravian University's Helen S. Breidegam School of Nursing began its PERRLA case study at the busiest possible moment: the school was in the middle of a full curriculum redesign and preparing for a CCNE accreditation visit. Rather than add anything to that load, the rollout was deliberately quiet – nursing students received access, and the choice to use it was entirely theirs.

That light touch became an interesting part of Moravian's story. With no mandate, no required training, and no points attached, the students who picked up PERRLA still reported meaningful time savings, greater confidence in their submissions, and less formatting stress. And the school didn't have to take anyone's word for it. Dr. Alissa Butler, Instructor of Nursing, did what nurse educators are trained to do with any practice question: she gathered the evidence.

The Challenge

The APA format runs through every corner of Moravian's nursing curriculum. When Dr. Butler surveyed her fellow faculty, not one course reported leaving it out – it shows up in papers, presentations, and discussion boards, almost always with points attached.

For students, formatting competed with content on every assignment: most spent one to two hours formatting each paper, and 88% leaned on online citation generators they still had to check line by line. Faculty carried the other half of the load – by their own estimates, 10 – 20% of grading time went to formatting corrections instead of feedback on the writing.

About the Program

Moravian University's Helen S. Breidegam School of Nursing, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, prepares nurses across traditional undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate programs, including nurse practitioner and doctoral study.

→ Formatting competes with content on every writing assignment, in every course

→ 10–20% of faculty grading spent on mechanics

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Offered, Not Required

Moravian's rollout was deliberately hands-off: students received access, PERRLA's standard onboarding material, and direct access to PERRLA's support team – nothing more. No required use, no webinars, no assignment built around it. That made Moravian a useful test of a simple question: what happens when students just have access?

What Students Reported

Rather than rely on impressions, Dr. Butler surveyed the students who had activated PERRLA about their experience before and after. Seventeen students responded.

Implementation Notes

500-seat case-study site license across the nursing programs

Deliberately light-touch rollout: access without required use

Onboarding and student support handled directly by PERRLA

129 papers, 595 references and 539 citations in the final twelve months

Going in, students were split: 47% were slightly confident and 41% were moderately confident in the APA format, and their hopes for the tool were simple: 88% wanted more accurate formatting, and 70% wanted less stress.

The results showed both:

- 72% found PERRLA very or extremely user-friendly
- Nearly 1 in 4 saved more than two hours per assignment; most of the rest saved between 30 minutes and two hours
- 72% felt very or extremely confident submitting their papers
- 75% reported strong gains in confidence
- 65% saw real improvement in the quality and professionalism of their writing
- 78% would recommend PERRLA to other students
- 72% said they would definitely or probably keep using it

An earlier course-level survey pointed the same direction. In NURS 506, a graduate course in nursing role theory and evidence-based practice, students praised how easily PERRLA handled citations and reference pages, and 7 of 12 respondents recommended it for the graduate program outright.

The open-ended answers may have said the most: students asked for PERRLA to be offered in the first course, and to be made available to both undergraduate and graduate students. The students who used it didn't just want to keep it – they wanted their classmates to start with it sooner.

Lessons & Recommendations for Others

Offer it in the first course – the students' own top suggestion. Meeting PERRLA before writing expectations stack up turns it into a habit instead of a rescue.

Gather your own evidence – a short before-and-after survey turned individual impressions into data a curriculum committee can actually weigh. It is the same evidence-based thinking nursing programs teach, applied to a teaching decision.

Pair access with a proper introduction – even with no requirements or training, students who adopted PERRLA reported real time savings and lower stress. A brief, structured introduction would reach the students who never discover the tool on their own.

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