Knapper, C., & Piccinin, S. (Eds.). (1999). *Using Consultants to Improve Teaching. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, Number 79.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Pages: 111 (paperback).

Reviewed by Alenoush Saroyan, McGill University.

This volume is a compilation of a series of presentations made at the 1998 *International Consortium for Educational Development* in a session on models of individual instructional consultation. The converging message of the chapters is the need for formal pedagogical development of faculty and the merit of peer consulting in addressing this need.

The sourcebook is written by practitioners for practitioners and as such, it will be a useful reference for instructional development centres and their staff. Both editors, Christopher Knapper and Sergio Piccinin, are actively involved in faculty development activities in their respective institutions, as are the remaining chapter contributors. Though the reader may not find the description of various approaches to peer consulting terribly novel, reading about peer consulting approaches as they have been implemented internationally (Canada, the United States, Britain, Norway, Australia) and in a range of postsecondary institutions is bound to be of interest.

The first chapter, co-authored by the editors, offers an overview about the individual consulting process as one of the services typically offered by instructional development centres. The authors underscore the need for instructional development centres to clearly articulate the conception of teaching that underpins their instructional consulting and guides them in using strategies to diagnose problems and to bring about change. The authors then raise several questions which frame the content of subsequent chapters. For instance: Who are the users of instructional development centres? What kinds of issues prompt individuals to seek guidance from faculty developers? What kinds of skills are needed in peer consulting? How are these skills developed? Who should be a consultant: disciplinary peers or pedagogical specialists? What is the best process for selecting consultants and what kind of support can be most beneficial to consultants?

The chapter by Hicks is a follow-up to the recommendation to articulate a conceptual framework for faculty development centres and interventions. First, he reviews various definitions of peer consultation that have emerged from the work of North American practitioners, as well as those from Australia and Britain. He then suggests that a distinguishing factor between consulting and other forms of instructional interventions is that in consulting, the "seekers are proactive in initiating the process and setting the agenda" (p. 12). Hicks raises another important question: that pertaining to the appreciation of instructional consultation by those who provide funding, as well as by those who directly benefit from the service.

The next five chapters provide examples of peer consulting programs implemented with apparent success in a variety of postsecondary contexts. Barbara Millis describes ways in which classroom observation, student focus groups and small group instructional diagnosis have been used for this purpose at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Michael Kerwin describes a statewide, multi-campus peer consultation program which supports the development of the consultant, as well as the peer client. Milton Cox introduces the notion of peer consultation through faculty learning communities. Beaty describes consultation through action learning and Handal introduces the concept of "critical friends" as peer consultants. These chapters highlight a process which invites participation and contribution from faculty members. They suggest that the experience itself garners immense personal satisfaction for those who accept the responsibility of mentoring colleagues and are willing to develop the required skills for this purpose.

What I found interesting about these chapters is the subtle message they convey concerning the value of "sustainable" staff development. This is a process where faculty not only make personal gains by participating in peer consulting programs, but are able to actively contribute to the institutional agenda of improved teaching and learning. The expertise is clearly moving outside a specific unit that is designated for staff development. The obvious advantage of the described programs is that they demonstrate ways in which limited resources of instructional development centres can be extended. Spreading the activity to a larger base

is also a huge step toward nurturing an institutional climate which brings teaching out of the confines of the classroom and gives it its due place and space in the range of academic responsibilities. I found several important issues referred to briefly in these chapters which, in my opinion, merit a lengthier discussion. Two examples are Kerwin's comment on the importance of "separating the [peer consulting] program from the [teaching] evaluation process" (p. 33) and Handal's emphasis on the significant role that institutions play in "recognize[ing] faculty members' competence...minted in the system's own currency: due emphasis in relation to appointment, tenure and promotion" (p. 63). The most disappointing aspect of these chapters remains the limited view they project by limiting the message to simple anecdotal accounts of peer consulting programs. They neither present empirical evidence to support claims of effectiveness on teaching and learning nor do they ground their content in the rich literature already existing on this topic (see Fenwick, 2000, for another critique of this book). This literature makes a strong case that most change in faculty is effected when individuals have personal visions of goals, engage in critically inquiring into their practice, have the opportunity to learn new skills, are given the time to collaborate with supportive colleagues and acquire new ideas (Carlson-Dakes & Sanders, 1998; Johnston, 1997; Marincovich, 1998).

The remaining three chapters do not exactly follow the same theme as the previous set. One hesitates to say that this is a shortcoming of the volume because they communicate more substantive views. The chapter by Weston and McAlpine casts instructional consulting as "all activities that are carried out for the purpose of enhancing teaching at the university..." (p. 86). They describe the intentional process of implementing an "integrated approach to instructional consultation" at their institution — an approach which implies a closer collaboration between instructional development centres and other academic units. Clearly, improving teaching involves developing systems of work relations, an activity system in which people work together on tasks (Bess, 2000; Saroyan, 2000). The "integrated approach" supports this notion, though as it is described in this chapter, it excludes the institutional context from the activity system. It would be simplistic to assume that in the absence of policies that

support the formal recognition of teaching competence from the institution's perspective, a shift from "generic" to "integrated" approach or a move to discipline-based faculty development will result in a significant improvement in teaching and learning.

With one exception, and that is the chapter by Piccinin, the book falls short in producing hard data to support the effectiveness of consultation in improving teaching and learning. This token empirical study builds on the existing literature and provides actual data from one institution on the impact of individual consultation on teaching effectiveness as measured by student course evaluations. Reported findings are impressive even though the sample is limited. The final chapter consists of specific references to various printed resource materials on peer consulting. This is a useful final addition.

Combined, the chapters communicate that peer consulting, though perhaps not cost- and time-effective, has a positive pay-off in creating a dynamic environment where teaching is valued and where colleagues are encouraged to discuss teaching openly and regularly. Moreover, it is a process in which faculty members can assume a mentoring role, and in the process will develop personally into more reflective teachers. Does this volume contribute to the scholarship of professional development? I would say only in a very limited way. As faculty developers, our biggest challenge is not to provide more descriptive pieces, but to produce data other than personal satisfaction of clients for the effectiveness of our work. Our advocated ways are neither time- nor cost-effective and in these days when institutions are very careful in allocating resources, we have no choice but to present evidence that clearly supports the value of what we do. We need to develop measures of teaching effectiveness and objective ways in which we can assess pedagogical competence. This is our challenge now.

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Reviewed by Hans G. Schuetze, The University of British Columbia.

Why would you want to change the way universities and colleges work, and how would you go about it? While there is plenty of literature about change in higher education, and even more about the need for it, this book stands out both for its uncompromising vision, bold views and the wide sweep of its suggestions. It has been written by William Tierney, director of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, an elite private university.

Tierney contends that in the majority of universities structures and processes have not much changed since the beginning of the (last) century, and that such change was, where it occurred, unsystematic and insufficient. He argues that universities must embrace systematic