

Book Reviews

Planning for Effective Faculty Development: Using Adult Learning Strategies. Patricia A. Lawler & Kathleen P. King. Malabar, FL: Krieger, 2000, 161 pages.

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The primary audience for this text, the authors argue, are "faculty development practitioners and other professional adult educators who are responsible for developing and presenting faculty development initiatives" (p. x). They go on to suggest that the book "can also serve as a text for graduate education courses in faculty, staff, or professional development" (p. xi). Although inexperienced faculty developers in particular may indeed find the text useful, I am less certain that it makes a good text for a graduate course. My reasons become clear below.

On p. 91 the authors summarize clearly what they believe is their greatest contribution: "The goal of this book is to enhance the effectiveness of faculty development through thoughtful and systematic planning based on the theories of adult learning." Although this is indeed a valuable idea, it is perhaps not quite as innovative as the authors suggest. As early as 1983 Geis and Smith explored what it might mean for the practice of faculty development "if Professors are Adult Learners," and over the past few decades many scholars have built on this point (Brookfield, 1995; Cranton, 1994, 1996; Saroyan & Amundsen, 1997). The six adult learning principles that according to the authors should inform faculty development practice are: being aware of and drawing on faculty's experiences; creating a climate of respect; focusing on the application of learning; using collaborative inquiry; encouraging active participation; and empowering the faculty. In Chapter 2 they introduce a model called the "Adult learning model for faculty development," which brings together the two ideas of adult learning and program planning. The model consists of four stages: a preplanning stage, a planning stage, a delivery stage, and a follow-up stage. Some adult learning principles, the authors argue, apply in each stage, and all six apply in the delivery stage. Several good points are made as these four stages are described in greater detail in the chapters that follow. I found Chapter 2 the strongest chapter in the book and would recommend it highly.

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I liked that the authors discussed empowerment of the faculty as an important goal of faculty development. Although a brief definition of empowerment is provided—for example, in reference to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), the authors state, “As learners become aware of their situation through education and self-reflection they may become empowered to make changes and take action” (p. 102)—I would have liked to see more in-depth discussion of this concept. What does empowerment mean in the context of faculty development? This strikes me as all the more important if the text is intended to be a practical guide for inexperienced faculty developers. How do I empower my colleagues—rather, how do I help them to empower themselves? The reader is told, “Opportunities should be afforded the faculty to come to an understanding of the new learning, take action on the learning, reflect on the process, and then use those reflections to apply insights to future situations” (p. 102.). Well, that sounds easy enough! To be fair, the authors spend quite some time discussing the importance of transfer of learning. In relation to facilitating such transfer, they emphasize that faculty developers should make sure that the necessary resources are available (e.g., after a workshop on technology, computers and software should be accessible to faculty for them to practice what they have learned, etc.). Although this is a valid point, I would have found some discussion of the psychological construct of transfer more interesting.

Other good suggestions made—although not necessarily new—include involving the faculty throughout the planning process, conducting needs assessments, evaluating initiatives regularly, engaging in both formative and summative evaluation, being clear on the purpose of the program, learning about the culture of the organization, being aware of power relations (I particularly enjoyed the reference to Cervero & Wilson’s work), ensuring administrative support for the program, and engaging in self-evaluation.

I would like to raise some issues that I believe could have been explored in greater detail. I note the rather vague discussion of reflective practice and Schön’s notion of the reflective practitioner. A book claiming to make a contribution using Schön’s concept of reflective practice could be expected to provide a little more depth in explaining the role of reflection. It may be precisely because we have not yet fully come to understand the nature of reflection—what it looks like when faculty developers (or faculty for that matter) engage in reflection—that much of the literature published on the topic has had little impact on practice.

There is some mention of the importance of recognizing academic values, but no in-depth discussion is provided of how teaching and learning, and faculty development for that matter, could attain greater prestige and status in universities. I am surprised that no reference is made to the idea of the scholarship of teaching, let alone any of the literature on this topic that has evolved over the past decade including some influential reports released by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Although the authors highlight the importance of identifying the goals of a faculty development program, they provide no philosophical discussion of goals. I was puzzled that although citing Cranton (1996) and Mezirow (1990) the authors do not introduce the idea of having transformative learning itself as a goal of the faculty development program. Instead, when faculty learning is

discussed, this discussion often centers around technical skills. We may ask, however, what about reflection (and changes) in faculty's conceptions of teaching and learning; in their roles as educators; in the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills they believe students should acquire while at university? I surmise that the link to transformative learning is intended when the notion of empowerment is introduced, but this link could have been established more clearly.

Finally, program evaluation is explored as a critical step in planning and practicing faculty development. Clearly no one would deny the importance of faculty development program evaluation. Since the 1970s scholars have repeatedly emphasized this point, and recent literature has moved beyond highlighting the need for program evaluation to making suggestions for how to conduct such evaluations (Berquist & Phillips, 1975; Centra, 1978; Ferren & Mussell, 1987; Gaff & Morstain, 1978; Hoyt & Howard, 1978; Nelson, 1979; O'Connell & Meeth, 1978; Pellino, Boberg, Blackburn, & O'Connell, 1981; Shore, 1976; Smith & Beno, 1993; Wergin, 1977; Young, 1987) to point to some problems in evaluating faculty development initiatives (L'Hommedieu, Menges, & Brinko, 1990; Piccinin, Cristi, & McCoy, 1999). However, little of this faculty development program evaluation literature is cited. The authors make reference to Kirkpatrick (1998), but then do not elaborate on his four levels of evaluation. That faculty development program evaluation can occur on different levels certainly is implied in the book, but the point is not made explicitly. Questions such as "How do the evaluation methods/strategies need to change with the level of the evaluation?" should have been explored.

The book also features two appendices, "Faculty Development Checklist" and "Faculty Developer's Self-assessment Tool." These two questionnaires may be quite useful for people new to faculty development. However, they also invite some questions. In the first appendix the faculty developer is encouraged to "Review your philosophy of education," although little guidance is provided on how this might be achieved, and this despite the fact that much has been written on this topic. On the second page of this same appendix, the authors introduce the concept of real versus perceived needs by suggesting, "Identify the faculty's perceived and real needs," but nowhere (as I recall) is the distinction discussed between real and perceived needs, which was first introduced by Brookfield (1986), nor is any advice provided on how a faculty developer could possibly go about this.

I commend the authors for their accessible writing style, which will appeal to practitioners. Overall, however, I found the text somewhat disappointing for the reasons mentioned. For me it did not go into sufficient depth with many of the points raised, although I did find some quite intriguing. On the other hand, I realize that 160 pages can be quite limiting. Furthermore, I am aware as a faculty developer in my previous life and scholar of adult and higher education at present that I am not really the right audience for this book. This leads me to conclude that inexperienced faculty developers, that is, those new to the field with no prior knowledge of program development or adult learning theory, will find the text a useful introduction to faculty development. As a text for a graduate studies, however, I believe it is inappropriate for two reasons. First, it is not scholarly enough with respect to the depth by which concepts such as

program evaluation and adult learning are explored; second, there is no discussion of the higher education teaching and learning and scholarship of teaching literature.

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