

This book's report on these factors (that raise school effectiveness) is a little different; they appear in two groups, English speakers and others (p. 258). In the English speaking systems, the relevant factors are "principal leadership, expectations from students, school goals, inter-staff relations and school image." In the other systems they are "the child's experiences, instructional style, curriculum and parental influence." Now "parental influence" is strong in all Confucian traditions, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. This naturally transpires from the detailed statistics (p. 265). (I doubt the book's comparing them with Norway is homogeneous in some sense. See pp. 289-290.)

Finally, the wealth of worthwhile evidence about the more fortunate places (North America, Northern Europe, Australia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) may come handy, even though it is not too reliable, since research difficulties are enormous. Participants deserve congratulation for their frankness on this. And the very wealth of information (interested readers are invited to request more, p. 302) imposes superficiality and reduces usefulness. Also a discussion of statistical methods is missing. (And the presentation of the statistical material here could be more reader-friendly.) The more obvious items, such as the great importance of job satisfaction, are better presented than the more intriguing ones: it is easy to overlook the fact that Norwegian schools do not grade pupils (p. 284).

The book sounds too expert, yet it takes much too little notice of even matters that concern the expert and the inexpert alike, such as severity of tests of hypotheses and inter-dependence of variables. (These two items are inter-related: do the better schools cover more of the curriculum or is this but a silly touchstone?) Repetition and improvement are desirable. This review should encourage both: as the project is commendable, its frequent repetition and improvement should be more so.

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One of the more universal movements in Western higher education in recent years –although glaciers move, it should be noted – is from the

teaching to the learning paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995). That is to say, we have begun to focus more formally on the outcomes of instruction – what the student learns – as opposed to more exclusive attention on the processes and content that is intended to produce this learning. Some critics have denounced this choice as an either / or proposition. But the most progressive advocates of the learning paradigm see the teaching paradigm as a subset wholly contained within the broader learning perspective. It is with implicit embrace of this more holistic and non-antagonistic viewpoint that Gill Nicholls has produced *Developing Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*.

In the United States and Canada, the imperative toward a learning paradigm has been irregular, scattered, and far from universal, owing perhaps to the decentralized, essentially nonfederal structuring and governance of higher education. In the United States, the effort has depended basically upon persuasion (Boyer Commission, 1998). However, the interests of regional accrediting agencies in measuring educational outcomes, as well as the establishment by state legislatures of institutional performance criteria, have compelled greater interest, at least at minimal-criteria levels. But as elsewhere, undergraduate learning responsibility is viewed as fairly competitive with other goals of the university, other goals that carry more prestige (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman, 2001).

In the United Kingdom, the trends toward the learning perspective, as part of a larger picture of assessment and accountability, have been driven by the 1997 Dearing Report and its repercussions. It is from this context that Nicholls, as director of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) at King's College of the University of London, works and writes.

These pressures are not universally accepted as advancements. Louise Morley, also of the University of London, has recently written that “the higher education system in Britain is now the most audited in the world. The regulation and surveillance is on a scale that is becoming increasingly unacceptable to British academics” (2002, p. 131).

Nicholls acknowledges that the creation of the ILT has “increased the pressure” on universities for teaching excellence as might be demonstrated by learning outcomes, but this book on recommended practices to accomplish such is much more positive in perspective, and “encourages diversity, creativity, enthusiasm and commitment to the art of teaching” (p. 1). While the particular British scheme of progressive levels of individual membership and virtual certification in the ILT are

discussed briefly, the work is useful to any instructor who takes up Nicholls' charge.

The book is organized into a dozen chapters, including "The changing context in teaching and learning in higher education," "Programme and course design," "Assessment," "Continual professional development," and "Collecting evidence and building a portfolio." While the author's organization and exposition of the material is original, it is drawn from an extensive and critical review of research and practitioner literature, particularly from the United Kingdom and the United States.

The chapter "Conducting teaching and learning sessions" is illustrative of the author's approach. He moves from a summary of the literature on the effectiveness for learning of the traditional lecture method, and lists both advantages and disadvantages of the approach. He invites the reader to examine the elements of his or her own lecturing style, noting techniques that have proven effective, and contrasts these with common student criticisms of lectures and lecturers. Given this framework, the reader is walked through the steps of effective lecture organization and delivery, and means of getting feedback on effectiveness. The chapter then transitions to a discussion of alternatives to the lecture, including effective practice through small groups, seminars, and tutorials. Integration of current technology into these approaches caps the chapter.

As in all other chapters, the material is presented clearly and concisely. Nicholls facilitates visual organization and summary of the material through boxing and bulleting of key points. This technique, however, becomes tiresome if one tries to consume too much of the book at one time. The chapter here discussed, for example, has more than 150 bullets. When "key" points are thus machine-gunned, it is virtually impossible for them to all hit target. The reader is thus advised not to consume too much of this valuable work in a single setting.

A better use, for example, would be as a guidebook at hand, in which a chapter or half might be read at a time and considered more carefully, or as a means to diagnose and correct perceived deficiencies in one's own teaching. It would also serve well as a text, perhaps a supplementary one, in a class on university pedagogy. The "supplementary" qualification is based on the book's focus: the work is addressed to *faculty* responsibility. Very little if any attention is given to the topic of *student* responsibility and its enhancement. While this is an understandable delimitation – it is hardly reasonable to ask that a single text consider all the dimensions of interaction and responsibility in the

modern university – one should not look to this work as a comprehensive tome on the broader subject. Absent are too many pressing topics, such as the rise in plagiarism facilitated by the Internet, for it to be such.

Although Nicholls clearly intends this book as a practical guide to improved practice, his optimism, and respect for the profession and its traditions, are obvious foundations for the work. He does not chide practitioners for their failures, but seeks to help them implement their ideals. Note again his structure and emphasis in the section on the lecture method. Nicholls does not, as do simplistic dogmatists, summarily dismiss the lecture method as an anachronism and the enemy of deep learning. Rather, he spends considerable effort on situating the lecture method properly and with due respect in higher education, and then moves to explaining how it might be more effective, before turning to its alternatives. That breadth of perspective and encouraging tone will enhance the reception and high regard that *Developing Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* deserves.

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